Global nomads in an international school : a case study of families in transition

McLachlan, Debra Ann

Global Nomads in an International School: A Case Study of Families in Transition

Debra McLachlan

2003

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD degree at King's College London, University of London, January 2003.

Abstract

This thesis is about internationally mobile families managing transience and the place of international schooling in that process. It is based upon the findings of a qualitative research study conducted at a private, international school in Southern England. 45 internationally mobile (IM) families from diverse cultures and advantaged backgrounds participated in the study. The study included an intervention that consisted of the development and implementation of a Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme for 13- to 14-year old students with a parent involvement component. The PSE programme served as a vehicle both for the researcher to access families and for the IM families to discuss issues together. Parents and their adolescent children used the PSE programme to communicate about important family issues based upon their perceived needs and sensitive topics. After the completion of the PSE programme, 90 semi-structured, audio taped interviews were conducted in this single case study with parents and their adolescent children.

The initial focus of the study explored parent involvement in their children's education and the focus broadened as the overarching theme of managing transience emerged from the data. Specific themes included the human costs of relocation stress to IM families as well as the benefits to IM families of living an IM lifestyle. The complexity of parent/ adolescent relationships in IM families, the challenges of parenting 'global nomads' or 'Third Culture Kids' (TCKs), and the complexities of 'roots', nationality, the concept of 'home' and a 'sense of belonging' for IM children were opened up in the analysis. The involvement of families in children's education and the international school community were found to be important links in the management of transience. Parents, particularly the majority of mothers, used the international school community to monitor and to keep close contact with their uprooted children, to pursue their perceived parental responsibilities and if needed, to establish a support system for themselves. The preservation and integrity of the family were of primary importance to the IM families in this study.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the internationally mobile families who participated in my study wherever they may be.

Acknowledgements

Many family members gave their support over the years that I conducted my research and completed this thesis. I thank my husband, Donald McLachlan; my parents, Franklin and Joan O'Toole; my sister, Kathleen Collins; my brothers, Thomas O'Toole and John O'Toole; and my mother-in-law, Marie McLachlan. I especially thank my mother and my brother, Tom.

I thank my research supervisors, Dr. Alan Cribb and Dr. Meg Maguire for their expertise, encouragement and enthusiasm.

My sincere gratitude goes to my physicians who stabilised my health: Dr. Claudio Lehmann, Rheumatologist; Dr. James McCulley, Ophthalmologist; and Dr. M. Reza Dana, Ophthalmologist.

I thank my friends: My computer companion (Winnie), Laurie and Niels Christiansen, Joyce Blood, Bo Wood, Sherry Duncan, Shereeza and Larry Mohammed, Ronnie Barker, Mary Beth Walker, Kris Riddlesperger, Pat Bradley, Pam Frable and Nancy Eder.

A special thank you to Chiz Dubé.

CONTENTS

Key Terms and Acronyms

'Third Culture Kids'
'A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001:19)

'Global Nomads'
'A person of any age or nationality who has lived a significant part of his or her developmental years in one or more countries outside his or her passport country because of a parent's occupation.' (Schaetti, 1998: 13)

'IM': Internationally Mobile

'PI': Parent Involvement

'PSE': Personal and Social Education

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, which focus on different aspects of families in transition. In this short introduction I provide an outline of the structure and content of each chapter.

Chapter 1, 'Families in Transition' considers the experiences of internationally mobile (IM) families who relocate and live abroad through a review of some of the key literature and research in the field. The positive and negative effects of relocation and the adjustment process to change for families are explored. Significant themes in the literature that relate to IM families are examined. These themes include family cohesiveness, parental guilt and worry about their uprooted children, the nature of 'roots', 'a sense of belonging' and the concept of 'home'. 'Global Nomads' and 'Third Culture Kids' (TCKs), terms used to describe IM children who grow up overseas, are examined. The chapter contains a discussion about what IM families may experience as a whole when they relocate as well as a review of studies conducted with children, mothers and children, and whole family units. Changes in family dynamics and relationships with extended families are also examined.

Chapter 2, 'Families and Schools' focuses on the literature about home – school relations, specifically parent involvement in their children's education 'at school' and 'at home'. The relationship between parents and schools is explored illustrating changes in practice whereby parent involvement in schools is being replaced by family-school partnerships and parent-school collaboration. Major issues are examined and include: varying definitions of parent involvement, the untapped resource of parent involvement 'at home', obstacles to involvement, differing parental and teacher beliefs about the domains of education 'at home' and 'at school'. The chapter also explores the process of involvement, reasons for involvement and advantages and disadvantages of involvement.

Chapter 3, 'Methodology' describes the phases of the study, context, timetable and origins of this qualitative research study conducted at an international school in Southern England. Demographic data about participants in the study and background information about the school are presented. The rationale for using a qualitative research design is examined. Entry into the field, participant access, informed consent, confidentiality and ethical issues are addressed. Interviewing as a research strategy and details about the interview process are discussed. The challenges associated with researching children and researching families are explored. The analysis, interpretation, and rigor of the study are examined.

Findings of the study are presented in Chapters 4 through 7. Chapter 4, 'Relocation Stress: The Human Costs' explores the emotional and social costs of moving experienced by the IM families in my study. Issues of bereavement (loss of friends) for IM adolescent students, father absence due to work related responsibilities, the loss and challenges experienced by IM mothers and complications of living an IM lifestyle are examined. The importance of the international school community and the involvement of IM families in the international school community to establish social support networks and provide close contact and monitoring of the uprooted children are explored.

Chapter 5, 'Internationally Mobile Families: Surviving & Thriving an IM Lifestyle' explores the ways IM families manage the challenges of relocation and transience, and reach out to embrace change and opportunities for growth. IM families can strengthen themselves as family units and manage the delicate balance between independence and cohesiveness of individual family members and the family as a whole. The chapter also explores the role of the international school community in this process. The 'meaning of home', a 'sense of belonging' and the complexity of nationality are also considered.

Chapter 6, 'The Nature of Family Involvement in Education' focuses on the importance of examining the contexts in which children learn with emphasis on

learning at home within the family. The nature of family involvement and factors that promote or hinder the process are examined. The perspectives of parents and their adolescent children about family involvement in education are explored. Issues of child embarrassment with some types of parent involvement and the strategies children used to deal with this conflict are examined. The discomfort of some non-American IM mothers about being involved 'at school' is discussed.

Chapter 7, 'Home/School Partnership: Parent-Adolescent Communication' explores how IM families used a PSE programme as a vehicle to communicate with each other about perceived needs and important issues, some of which involved the discussion of sensitive topics. The chapter examines the complexities of parent/adolescent relationships. The challenges of initiating and discussing sensitive topics within the family are discussed. During the PSE programme, the ways in which parents work to prepare their adolescent children for the transition from adolescence to adulthood are considered.

Chapter 8, 'Conclusions: The Complexities of Managing Transience' considers key themes in the study; contributions to gaps in the literature, and implications for future research and practice. IM families need to find a balance in managing the cohesiveness of the family and independence needs of individual family members. IM mothers need to balance their lives, so that they are not over involved with their children and the international school. The role of IM mothers as the emotional and social caretakers of the family is examined. IM fathers try to balance their work and home lives, so that there is time for family. The study provides a 'voice' from fathers who are often omitted in IM family studies. Father absence does necessarily mean non-involvement. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the impact of globalisation is likely to affect a growing number of families. Managing transience might become a dominant aspect of family life in future decades.

CHAPTER 1

FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

Introduction

This chapter provides a brief overview of the key American research which has investigated the issues which impact internationally mobile families. However, before undertaking this review it is important to underline two main aspects. First, the literature review serves as a platform for the empirical investigation which lies at the centre of this thesis. The findings which have accrued over time serve as a force for comparison and contrast. Aspects of these earlier studies have shaped the way in which my study has developed in that many variables which have been considered over time, such as the contested matter of 'culture shock' and the issue of a need for 'roots' have been revisited.

A second key aspect which is critical to consider before the research review is undertaken is that many of the studies which are reported are quite old, stretching back to the 1970s. Whilst the findings are of interest, it does need to be remembered that the research focus on IM families has shifted significantly since this period. By this, I mean that much of the early work was posited on the basis of a 'problem' or on a 'deficit' notion of transition. Mobility was always only seen as a difficulty which, if not managed effectively, could result in problematic outcomes. Thus, early research on mobility has focused on depressed wives and mothers, troubled adolescents and adults who have had relationship difficulties post-mobility. Much of the research has been psychologistic in style; that is, issues such as self-esteem, loss, grief, and psychic states have been examined, sometimes on the basis of questionnaires which themselves were derived from this 'problems' based' view of international mobility. The consequence of this thrust in much, but not all, of the work on international mobility has been that in some way, certain attributes have been taken for granted and have come to be seen as 'received wisdom' in the field.

In the review of research findings which follows, I want to chart the trajectory of work on internationally mobile families and trace some of the key themes which shape the field. However, I want to start to suggest that there is a need to re-engage with some of these older studies in order to generate a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of a complex and changing phenomenon.

The History

The 20th century has been marked by great economic and social change. This section briefly highlights important historical developments that are pertinent background to this study. Before the Second World War, children from the United Kingdom represented the largest number of 'internationally mobile' children. This was a consequence of the United Kingdom's vast holding of colonial possessions around the world (Gerner et al, 1992). With the end of the Second World War, the number of American children relocating with their parents from the United States increased due to the reconstruction of Europe and technological needs of developing nations. The families who relocated were generally associated with the military, financial, and international corporations (Gerner et al, 1992; Useem and Downie, 1976).

The end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and subsequent elimination of the Iron Curtain led to the opening of closed economies and democratisation of economic markets in Eastern Europe (Mittelman, 2000). One result of these historical developments has been the explosion of financial global markets (Brecher, 1993). Mittelman (2000: 5) writes that globalisation is 'the process of reducing barriers between countries and encouraging closer economic, political, and social interaction'. The movement toward globalisation has resulted in the continuing and increasing relocation of expatriates and their families around the world for the purpose of managing global economic markets. For example, researchers cite the large increase of Japanese families who relocate as a result of Japan's influence and position in international financial markets (Gerner et al, 1992; Gellar, 1981). International corporations are very involved in expanding their products and providing their expertise to developing nations. In addition, another significant development occurred

during this period, when the European Community was established and began to integrate the economies of member countries into one economy which precipitated further increases in family mobility.

As more people operate within the 'global village', 'geography has, in this sense, been pronounced dead' (Holton, 1998: 1). However, geography is very much alive for IM families as they relocate from country to country around the globe. To meet the needs of these IM families, schools were established that could provide a more international education for the children (Matthews, 1989; Gellar, 1981). Matthews (1989: 24) describes the importance of international schools on education worldwide as being 'an influence equivalent to a nation of 3-4 million where 90 per cent of students go on to higher education'. Thus, across the globe it is possible to chart the growth of international schools. However, there are other school systems for IM families to choose from. For example, some IM parents choose schools which are nationally based on various systems which include American (US), British, French and German educational systems (McCluskey, 1994). Pascoe (1994) notes that many international schools were initially founded by embassies of British, Japanese, Indian, and French origins. These schools cater for IM families who often have a variety of needs for a flexible and portable education. Some parents want their children to have an international education which may be an issue because it is not unusual for international schools to be oriented to a particular nationality/culture and thus have a bias (Pearce, 1998). Chapter 6 explores this issue and how IM parents of various nationalities and cultures manage family involvement in their child's education.

Relocation Stress

A review of the literature reveals that the stress of relocation can be greatly underestimated (Jonietz, 1988; Weissman & Paykel, 1972; Gaylord, 1979; Gaylord & Symons, 1986; Bowen, 1989). Individuals and families can underestimate the overwhelming amounts of stress they may experience in order to adjust to the changes imposed on them by relocation (Weissman and Paykel, 1972). In particular, individuals and families may underestimate the intense confrontation to their self-

concept and the emotional anguish often experienced with relocation (Weissman and Paykel, 1972; Gaylord, 1979). Relocation has been described as a 'serious shock to the family system' (Jonietz, 1988: 32) and Sinetar (1986) refers to moving as 'relo shock'. Marshall and Cooper (1979) refer to relocation 'mobility syndrome'. Hausman and Reed (1991) note that removing children from their schools, leaving family, friends and other supportive persons in the community, and interrupting the spouse's career usually results in some degree of relocation stress for all members of the family. Relocation stress involves change. When looking at families, each member of the family goes through the stages of change individually and as a whole family unit. Smith (1991) states:

> In the case of a travelling family, everyone's shock, everyone's moods, everyone's happiness affects the whole family. If the balance is off, then the family rhythm is off. Eventually, someone's unhappiness will affect everyone. (Smith, 1991: 119-120)

Hausman and Reed (1991) explored how people adjust to relocation. They refer to moving as a 'life crisis' and address the process of how individuals perceive the stress of relocation and how they deal with the changes resulting from 'loss' and 'separation'. They describe the range of reaction to the changes of relocation stress as a phase that some individuals go through without much difficulty and others find distressing (Hausman and Reed, 1991). It is normal to see a range of different reactions to relocation stress. Gaylord (1979) claims that family members will experience the stress of relocation in their own unique, individual ways. Hausman and Reed (1991) claim that the usual strategies used to deal with the stress of moving within a national setting are not effective in a trans-national context and the IM individual(s) can be faced with a combination of emotional feelings that often include nervousness, anger, bewilderment, powerlessness and vulnerability.

Many individuals and families underestimate the stress associated with relocation because they see moving as culturally acceptable and a part of everyday life. For example, moving is an expected occurrence in the lives of many Americans (Long, 1992; Pittman and Bowen, 1994). Pittman and Bowen (1994) estimate that one in five

Americans move annually. American children relocate more than children from Japan and countries in Western Europe (Long, 1992). In 1988, it was estimated that 2,054,148 Americans were living overseas with one quarter of a million being educated in international and host culture schools (Killham, 1990). Variations in the frequency of relocation for different nationalities as well as a look at highly mobile families (military) are addressed later in this chapter.

Weissman and Paykel (1972) point out that whenever people relocate their identities are confronted. Hausman and Reed (1991) state that moving may cause the whole family to be in crisis all at once or affect individual family members at different points in time. Gaylord (1979) points out that each family member experiences some loss of some kind when relocating even when family members feel that the move is beneficial. She also claims that some depression is normal under these circumstances.

The Extended Family and Change

Relocation causes change for the extended family. The extended family may grieve the loss of the nuclear family which has relocated (Jonietz, 1988). Like the nuclear family, the extended family goes through the stages of change and must create a new life and a new long-distance relationship with the family (Jonietz, 1988). Many relocated families work hard to keep their 'roots' and relationships with their extended families and friends. The changes in relationships within the extended family may affect the children's development (Werkman et al, 1982). Other families lose contact with their extended families and friends from the home country and lead more transient lives (Jonietz, 1988). Pascoe (1994) emphasises the need for families living abroad to create an extended family in their new location. She is not suggesting that families abandon their extended family in the home country, but that they frequently create a surrogate extended family made up of new friends from the new community. Pascoe (1994) also suggests that families can benefit from overseas communities because they offer an opportunity for families to develop friendships with people from all different age groups. There is further discussion about the significance of 'roots' later in this chapter and in Chapters 4 and 5.

Relocation: The Complexities of Transition

Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 199) state: 'It's vital that highly mobile families learn to deal well with the entire process of transition'. 'Transition' refers to 'passing or change from one place, state, condition to another' (Thompson, 1996:45). Although researchers have attempted to define and describe the process and the stages of transition or change, these defining characteristics do little toward understanding the complexities involved in how IM families manage change or transition. For example, over 3 decades ago, Toffler (1970) used the term 'culture shock' to describe the effects when individual(s) are exposed to a foreign culture stating that 'culture shock' is:

> ...what happens when familiar psychological cues that help an individual to function in society are suddenly withdrawn and replaced by new ones that are strange or incomprehensible. (Toffler, 1970: 13)

It is important to state that Toffler's world was less mobile and less culturally diverse and that the world has changed dramatically since 'culture shock' was first defined. At that time, it appeared that moving was often considered 'harmful' and 'culture shock' unmanageable. It is important to revisit these concepts because they may shift as people and the world change. Globalisation may have led to changes in the way people conceptualise phenomena associated with relocation and international mobility over the past few decades. The need to revisit these concepts is critical to understanding the complexities and the changing nature of being an IM family.

Jonietz (1988) described the stages of 'culture shock'. She described the stages of 'culture shock' as being synonymous with the stages of change. Stage 1 is characterised by euphoria and excitement about leaving or moving and by disengaging from the usual activities of living in the present location (Jonietz, 1988). Stage 2 corresponds to the arrival at the new location and involvement in everyday life, meaning the children go to school and parents begin their employment (Jonietz, 1988). Stage 3 involves the continual process of adjusting to the new location and Stage 4 involves leaving and re-entry to the 'home' country, (Jonietz, 1988). Pollock and Van Reken (2001) conducted research with IM families, particularly IM children. They

identified five stages in any transition which they referred to as: 'Involvement, leaving, transition, entering, and re-involvement, (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 199).

It has been suggested that the usual time frame for adjusting to relocation stress is approximately six months (Jonietz, 1988). Hausman and Reed (1991) claim that individuals will have less conflict and turmoil if they adjust to the new location within a two to six month period. Usually families work together to adjust to their losses of people and activities of daily living in their former location and to establish new support networks and lifestyles in the new location (Hausman and Reed, 1991). Hausman and Reed (1991: 247) state: 'Although we admire resilience, moving takes its toll'. Although there may indeed be challenges to the emotional and social health of families who relocate as will be noted in Chapter 4 of this thesis, some IM families not only survive moving, but actually thrive in their transition. It is important to consider that not all transitions are difficult. Pollock and Van Reken (2001: xvii) note that 'some transitions are surprisingly easy'. They write:

> This is so for any number of reasons – good preparation, family interaction, and community support; better continuity (old friends in a new place); familiar routines in a new setting; or the stimulation of the new culture and country. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: xvii)

Chapter 5 explores how the IM families in my study employ strategies to manage relocation and transience and do indeed experience benefits and satisfaction from the challenges that are presented.

Relocation: A Challenge to Self Concept and Well Being

The state of the person's self-concept or self-identity can be an important factor in how people adjust to relocation. Hausman and Reed (1991) claim that individuals who do not feel good about themselves as persons will generally have more difficulty when dealing with relocation. They may feel powerless and consider themselves 'victims'. It is not unusual for those persons who have low self-esteem to opt to use coping mechanisms that are less effective.

Weissman & Paykel (1972) studied depressed women living in New Haven, Connecticut. They discovered that many of these women who were being treated for depression had also recently relocated. The women did not connect their depression to the move. They kept their stress inside and believed that they themselves were the cause of their problems. The negative stress they experienced progressed into depression. In contrast, London and Mone (1987) claim that individuals with healthy, intact self-concepts may embrace change and the opportunities that may present. Hausman and Reed (1991) concur:

> Having developed trust and confidence that their self-identity will not change despite environmental changes, they reach out and more comfortably explore new situations. They are resilient. (Hausman and Reed, 1991: 253)

Two major issues emerge from the literature concerning the well being of individuals who relocate. One issue deals with whether individuals have choice or control over the decision to relocate (Stokols and Shumaker, 1982; Hausman and Reed, 1991). The other major issue for individuals who relocate involves the experience of separation and loss (Gaylord, 1979; Hausman and Reed, 1991). Stokols & Shumaker (1982) claim that the health status and happiness of those who relocate is affected by whether the family member has any choice or control over the decision to move. Hausman and Reed (1991) contend that families are in a difficult situation when presented with the decision to relocate. The decision not to relocate may damage the employee's career and/or cause loss of employment (Brown and Orthner, 1990; Hausman and Reed, 1991). Hausman and Reed (1991) note that dealing with the separation and loss involved in relocation may trigger earlier memories of separation and loss in the individual's life, such as the death of a parent or significant other person. It is not unusual for IM children to have problems with unresolved grieving (McCluskey, 1994; Pascoe, 1994; Pollock, 1994). Pollock (1994) states:

> The many separations resulting from nomadic lifestyle leave a residue of unresolved grief, anger, and depression. The multiple partings may also contribute to stresses in interpersonal relationships. Some global nomads decide never to allow others to get too close to them emotionally; in this way they defend themselves against the pain of separation. (Pollock, 1994: 73)

Furthermore, Pascoe (1994: 175) writes about the significance of unresolved grief for some children noting that 'it stands out as a major issue because it is a level of grief which in quantity and quality is higher than that which others may ever experience, even in a lifetime'. For many children, the pressure to be brave in these situations leads to grief being prolonged or not acknowledged at all (Pascoe, 1994). The issues of separation and loss in this review are relevant themes to this study. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss separation and loss as well as how the IM families in my study employ strategies to manage these situations.

The Expatriates, Fathers and Spouses

In the literature, people who live and work abroad are called expatriates. Harvey (1985) describes the expatriate as primarily male aged 30 to 45 years old. These men have a proven track record and they have often worked for their corporation for numerous years. The expatriates are sent by their corporations to destinations around the world due to their special talents, abilities and educational backgrounds (Useem & Downie, 1976). It has been estimated that 98 percent of workers managing global economic markets and finance are men (Falk, 1993). The majority of these expatriates are married with children, often school-age children. It has been the norm for 'occupational mobility' to equate with 'individual mobility' meaning that 'the family, and thus the wife, move with the husband' (Beck, 1992: 124). Another reason there are less sole/lone women expatriates is due to differing attitudes and acceptance of the role of women in some countries (Harvey, 1985; Hubbard, 1986; Tung, 1982).

Sponsoring organisations of the expatriate fathers include governments around the world (i.e. military, foreign service); financial institutions; international corporations (i.e. oil companies); international organisations (i.e. The World Health Organisation, UNICEF); and educators (Useem and Downie, 1976). The sponsoring organisation influences where the family will live, where the children will be educated, which languages are learned, who the family will interact with from the host country and other international families (Useem and Downie, 1976).

Brett (1982) studied families who were relocated approximately every two years within the United States, and she compared these mobile families to families who were more stable in their residence. Specifically, she attempted to measure perceptions of how these families feel about themselves and significant aspects of their lives that included their marriages and family life, careers, relationships with others, and the quality of their standard of living. 350 men and women from ten communities participated in the study (Brett & Werbel, 1980; Brett, 1982). Data about the 373 children in these families were obtained from the parents. Brett (1982) found differences between the well being of families who were relocated and families who were stable in their residence. She found that the relocated men and women were less satisfied with their social relationships as compared to the men and women who were more stable in their residence. 'Mobile men and women were less satisfied with opportunities to make friends at work, friends in general, non-work activities, neighbours, and community' (Brett, 1982: 457). This research is old and there is a need to revisit these topics, which is an important aspect of my research.

Harvey (1985) and Gaylord (1979) argue that expatriates report less stress than other members of their family because they are able to connect to a professional network when relocated. In addition, the children have schools as a base to help them adjust to the new location. The majority of the women have no network to connect with, and, in many cases, Gaylord (1979) claims that these women experience the most loss. Another reason men may have less stress with relocation is that frequently they make the decision to relocate the family and subsequently they are in control of what happens, and want the change (Weissman and Paykel, 1972; Useem and Downie, 1976). However, other family members may see the relocation very differently. Hausman and Reed (1991) note that family members who are not the initiators of the move may feel powerless and may be ambivalent and hostile to the family member who is responsible for the change. This certainly may be distressing for the expatriate who makes the decision to move the family.

Hubbard (1986) points out that some expatriate men may suffer from negative stress when they have difficulty working with a foreign culture. This stress is often exacerbated by the expatriate's feelings of not belonging and uncertainty. Other problems cited are that some expatriates keep their worries and concerns about their new foreign assignment to themselves, which can lead to communication problems within the family and a decrease in job effectiveness (Harvey, 1985). Some expatriates may turn to alcohol and other drug use when they feel unable to deal with their feelings and negative stress (Dunbar and Katcher, 1990). Brett and Werbel (1980) and Brett (1982) noted that men who relocated frequently had more psychosomatic health complaints than men who did not move frequently. They found that men who relocated frequently reported difficulty breathing and stomach complaints and rated their health lower than men who did not relocate (Brett and Werbel, 1980; Brett, 1982).

As fathers, the expatriates are often absent from home due to frequent travel, and, when not travelling they work long hours at the office (Werkman et al, 1982; Pascoe, 1994). Relocation may cause changes in the way family members communicate with each other (Hausman and Reed, 1991; Harvey, 1985). Werkman et al (1982) note that the father's absence results in an increase in the mother's role and responsibilities for raising the children. This creates additional stress on the mother who needs to adjust to the new culture and changes in her career and social life (Pascoe, 1994). Pascoe (1994) also notes that without the extended family close by, the mother must cope with the family unit being smaller. The expatriate needs to spend more time on the job, and this may be perceived as the expatriate deserting the family, an act of deliberately spending more time on the job instead of with the family. Pascoe (1994) warns that the lack of time fathers have to spend with their children may lead to irreparable damage to their relationships. Hausman and Reed (1991: 255) state that these feelings can lead to decreased communication among family members and a 'greater use of escape responses such as alcohol or emotional supports outside the family'. The changes in family dynamics and communication due to the absence of the father are explored further in Chapters 4 and 5.

However, the fact that fathers are away frequently for their jobs does not mean they are lacking in authority and control of their families. Researchers point out that fathers are generally the primary decision-makers in mobile families due to their dependence on the sponsoring organisation (Useem and Downie, 1976; Pascoe, 1994). The dynamics and well being of families will be affected by the authority and control of the father (Pascoe, 1994). Fathers monitor their children's behaviour more closely as consequences from the sponsoring organisation may be severe if the expatriate's children do not behave acceptably. For example, if a child of an IM family is brought up on illegal drug charges in a foreign country, the family is deported to the home country and the father's contract may be terminated (Useem and Downie, 1976). The decision to move is usually made by the father and sponsoring organisation (Pascoe, 1994). Although the expatriates are usually highly concerned about the effects of relocation on their spouses and children, they are faced with negative consequences from their employer should they decline the new assignment (Brett and Werbel, 1980; Brett, 1982; Hausman and Reed, 1991).

Mothers and Spouses

Many researchers have explored the mother's effect on the adjustment of the family to the move (Simon, Cook, and Fritz, 1990; Marchant and Medway, 1987). Simon, Cook and Fritz (1990) found that children adjust to a move in style similar to their mother. Marchant and Medway (1987) have noted similar outcomes with child dependants and their mothers in military families. Furthermore, other researchers have observed that the expatriate job performance is affected by the happiness and satisfaction of the spouse (Harvey, 1985; Tung, 1982, 1984). Hubbard (1986: 64) claims that the expatriate wives 'feel the cultural differences most keenly'. They may find themselves without their social and/or professional support networks. So, as the expatriate men go to the office and the children go to school, the expatriate wives experience a huge gap in their lives (Harvey, 1985; Hubbard, 1986).

During the 1970s, researchers and writers wrote about the hazards of relocation in numerous books, newspaper articles and magazine articles (Packard, 1972; Seidenberg, 1973; Toffler, 1970). Brett (1982) writes:

> The trauma of a mobile life-style is a frequent theme in the popular press. One reads that mobile employees have a high incidence of Coronary Heart Disease, whereas their wives suffer from depression and rootlessness, and the children are socially and emotionally maladjusted. (Brett, 1982: 450)

There are claims that the findings of some of these older studies have been over generalised (Brett, 1982). Stokols and Shumaker (1982) concur with Brett (1982) that research findings do not necessarily indicate widespread and inescapable adverse effects to individuals who experience relocation. Based on my review of the literature, widespread claims of this nature are not supported. However, there are gaps in the research about the long-term effects of relocation on individuals and families and further research is warranted.

In past research, some researchers claimed that there was a connection between depression in upper middle class women and recent relocation due to the job transfer of their spouses (Seidenberg ,1973; Weissman and Paykel, 1972). These clinical studies involved women who were being treated for depression, the data were in the form of case histories and the findings were based on self-reported evidence. Based on his work, Seidenberg (1973) concluded that these wives:

> ...often become defeated people, casualties of [their husband's] success... chronically depressed, lacking in hope or desire, frequently addicted to alcohol, tranquillisers, and barbiturates. (Seidenberg, 1973: 1-2)

Weissman and Paykel (1972) found that the depressed women they studied were unable to adjust to the stress of relocation and the consequences relocation had on their careers. They noted that some of the depressed women viewed their careers with despair. Often, frequent relocation results in unemployment and/or underemployment of women as they move every two years in some cases (Gaylord, 1979). Beck (1992) notes that the capitalist economy practice of 'individual mobility', developing the individuals they employ, often has adverse effects on the family. He cautions that

'individual mobility' for families leads to damaging consequences to the wife's career and/or may lead to a 'split family' (Beck, 1992: 124). A potential serious problem for these women is that they may never truly become part of a profession or may never feel the satisfaction of doing fulfilling work. In addition, at a time when they would be accumulating valuable professional experience from ages 28 to 35 years old, they are moving frequently, and the opportunity to progress in their careers is lost (Weissman and Paykel, 1972; Gaylord, 1979).

A possible link between depression and other mental health problems in women who relocate may be related to self-concept (Seidenberg, 1973). With each move, the individual must construct and establish a new self-concept in the new community (Seidenberg, 1973; Harvey, 1985; Jonietz, 1988). Seidenberg (1973) suggests that women who relocate frequently may not succeed in developing a new, satisfactory self-concept or may be reluctant to do so after frequent and successive moves. Gaylord (1979) notes that the self-concepts of some women may be devastated by the changes associated with relocation. Perhaps a way of understanding why some people have difficulty adjusting to relocation would be to further consider self-concept and self esteem. Hausman and Reed (1991) note that individuals may offset their feelings of low self-esteem by looking outside of themselves toward their environment to feel purposeful and secure lives. Relationships with others and perhaps their careers make them feel better about themselves. Relocation stress can be very severe for individuals with low self esteem because as their environment changes, they no longer can rely on this to feel secure and purposeful in their lives (Seidenberg, 1973; Gaylord, 1979; Hausman and Reed, 1991). Interestingly, the effects of relocation on women with intact self-concepts and healthy self-esteems have not been studied. Not surprisingly, it would seem highly probable that women with depression may have a predisposition to developing problems from any stress or change. Perhaps women with intact self-concepts and healthy self-esteem may be better able to withstand relocation stress and are therefore more resilient to the changes associated with moving. There is a gap in the research in this area. Chapters 4 and 5 explore these issues further in relation to the findings of this study.

Brett's work (1982) conflicts with earlier research results concerning women and relocation. Brett (1982) found women who were positive about their spouses' careers and accepted relocation as something they should do. These women did not describe themselves as 'victims'. She cautions that researchers should be wary of stereotyping and portraying women as 'victims' who are reluctant to relocate and unable to deal with the changes associated with relocation. Brett (1982) contends that perhaps some women are unhappy about the loss of friends and the need to make new friends with each move which she refers to as the 'friendship making/friendship leaving cycle'. She postulates that perhaps after women go through this 'friendship making/ friendship leaving cycle' a number of times, some women do not continue the cycle. Werkman (1986) claims that the time length of assignment may affect how women make friends noting that American assignments overseas usually are for 1 to 4 years in length and this may subsequently result in women making temporary or short term friendships. Another reason why Brett (1982) may have found that the women in her study viewed their spouse's career and relocation more positively is perhaps that women's attitudes had changed. Much of the research claiming that women were more negative about relocating to advance their spouse's career was conducted during the 1960s and early 1970s.

Weissman and Paykel (1972) noted that it was not unusual for male expatriates and their female spouses to see relocation differently. Expatriate women may not feel that a generous benefits package and change in social life outweigh the stress of relocation in all that it entails, and very often, it is the women who deal with the many tasks and responsibilities associated with the relocation itself. The men are often preparing for the new job assignment, and, in some cases, they have already moved ahead of their families. Based on the research of Weissman and Paykel (1972), Gaylord (1979: 187) claims that 'the wife pays the greatest price for a family's move'. Gaylord (1979) is not denying that relocation is stressful and recognises that it involves loss for men as well. She is, however, making the point that on the whole, it is the exception when women do not experience losses as a consequence of relocating. These losses may

include '…giving up friends, community, a sense of self-worth and identity, close contact with relatives, and, often, a job or career possibilities' (Gaylord, 1979: 187). The concept of 'loss' is a significant theme in this study and Chapter 4 focuses on the loss women may experience when they relocate.

The Children: Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and Global Nomads

During the 1960s, Ruth Hill Useem, Professor of Education and Sociology at the Institute for International Studies in Education, Michigan State University, studied the experiences of American expatriate families living in India. In 1962, Useem created the term 'Third Culture Kid' or 'TCK'. Dr. David Pollock, Cross-cultural expert and Executive Director of 'Interaction, Inc.' copyrighted the term 'TCK.' Useem and Downie (1976) describe 'TCKs' as young people who have lived overseas during their developmental years. They state:

> Although they have grown up in foreign countries, they are not integral parts of those countries. When they come to their country of citizenship (some for the first time), they do not feel at home because they do not know the lingo or expectations of others- especially those of their own age. Where they feel most like themselves is in that interstitial culture, the third culture, which is created, shared, and carried by persons who are relating societies, or sections thereof, to each other. (Useem and Downie, 1976: 103)

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) define TCKs as follows:

> A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 19)

Another term used to describe young people who have grown up overseas is 'global nomad' (Schaetti, 1998). Schaetti (1998) notes the origin of the term 'global nomad' which was coined in 1984 by Norma McCaig, an Adult "TCK' who grew up overseas.

Schaetti (1998) writes that a 'global nomad' is:

> … a person of any age or nationality who has lived a significant part of his or her developmental years in one or more countries outside his or her passport country because of a parent's occupation. (Schaetti, 1998: 13)

Both 'TCK' and 'Global Nomad' are terms used by researchers and others to describe children who are internationally mobile (Langford, 1998). Killham (1990) reports that various organisations have formed to support TCKs and IM families citing 'Global Nomads International', 'TCK Student Services', 'Mu Kappa International' and 'Interaction, Inc.' as examples of such groups who have responded to the unique needs of IM families.

The short and long-term effects relocation may have on children have not been thoroughly investigated. Although some reasons for relocation may be positive, Harvey (1985) claims that there is a 'built-in sense of loss' for children. For the most part, children do not want to move because it means they will have to leave their friends and school. Even children who have difficulties in school and/or with relationships with friends prefer to stay where they are (Harvey, 1985). Relocation represents the unknown and many children are anxious about this. Moving may be very stressful for children due to the changes in their daily activities that occur as a result of the move, and due to the fact, they usually have no control over the decision to move (Brown and Orthner, 1990; Wapner, 1981). Harvey (1985: 88) argues that 'corporate executive mobility typically forces children to be passive participants in relocation'. Gaylord (1979: 188) describes the reaction of children to relocation and portrays children subject to frequent relocation as 'victims of uprooting and alienation'. She argues that children's welfare may be at risk. Both Gaylord (1979) and Harvey (1985) suggest that children may suffer from unhappiness, insecurity, and isolation after moving. Gaylord (1979: 188) feels quite strongly that '...To be rooted in a place that has meaning is perhaps the best gift a child can have'.

Simon, Cook & Fritz (1990) studied the adjustment and extent of 'culture shock' experienced by expatriate children from other countries who relocated to the southwestern region of the United States. 47 mothers and their children participated in the study. They found that there was a relationship between the child's adjustment and level of 'culture shock' and their mother's reaction to the relocation. During the

interviews, the children reported feeling very satisfied with their lives and the majority of the children had quickly adapted to the foreign culture in the United States (Simon, Cook & Fritz, 1990). They found that the children experienced less 'culture shock' when their mothers anticipated and prepared for the changes brought on by relocation (Simon, Cook, and Fritz, 1990). The mothers were surveyed to find out how and what they did to prepare for the relocation to a foreign county and culture. Findings revealed that the mother's adjustment was dependent on how well the sponsoring organisation responsible for the decision of relocation prepared the spouse and family for the change. Simon, Cook, and Fritz (1990: 10) concluded that mothers have a significant influence on their children noting '...The mother represents a model for the child with regard to her openness to prepare, to read, and to learn the new culture and its language'.

Other researchers found that support from mothers and friends help adolescents deal with relocation stress and this support lessened any potential adverse effects to the adolescent's self-identity (Hendershott, 1989; Pittman & Bowen, 1994). Hendershott (1989) surveyed 205 students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades attending public schools in the Southwest of the United States. She specifically wanted to investigate how support from parents and peers affects the relationship between moving and self-identity. She attempted to measure self- identity by assessing 'self esteem,' 'mastery over the environment' and 'self denigration'. Findings revealed a significant relationship between relocation and 'mastery over environment' and that students who had high rates of relocation (3 - 4 moves) reported less control over their environment and lives overall (Hendershott, 1989).

An investigation conducted by Gerner et al (1992) compared the traits of IM American adolescents who were living overseas with the traits of non-IM American adolescents who were residing in the United States. In the Gerner et al study (1992), young people of all nationalities who were living overseas were referred to as 'internationally mobile' or 'IM'. In addition to comparing the traits of IM American adolescents with non-IM American adolescents residing in the United States, a comparison was made

between IM American adolescents and IM adolescents of mixed nationalities. This study was significant because it was the largest quantitative study of its kind with a sample size of 1, 076 (Gerner et al, 1992). Participants included: 489 adolescent students from an overseas school in Thailand; 365 adolescent students from an overseas school in Egypt; and 222 American adolescent students in the mid-western region of the United States who had always resided in the United States (Gerner et al., 1992). The participants attending the overseas schools were of mixed nationalities. (It is important to state that the two overseas schools in Thailand and Egypt were U.S.-based, American schools with thousands of students attending. These schools offered American oriented extracurricular activities and sports programs similar to those offered in schools in the United States.)

In the Gerner et al. (1992) study, it was postulated that IM American adolescents would report greater family attachment, less attachment to peers, more attraction to travel and studying other languages, and more interest in pursuing professions that would involve overseas life as compared to non-IM American adolescents. Not surprisingly, Gerner et al (1992) found that IM American adolescents rated themselves as more open to different cultures, more interested in travel and learning new languages, and more interested in international careers than non-IM American adolescents. It was also found that both IM American adolescents and non-American IM adolescents rated themselves more interested in the above areas. There was, however, an area where IM non-Americans differed from IM Americans and that was IM non-American adolescents rated themselves closer to their families than IM American adolescents. It is important to state at the outset that family cohesiveness is a complex construct and it can be problematic to attempt to measure this variable which could change from individual to individual based on definition and vary amongst family members over time. Chapters 4 and 5 of my thesis explore the inherent nature and complexities of family cohesiveness in relation to the IM families in my study.

Relocation and Age, Gender and Family Structure

This section examines three significant factors that influence adjustment to relocation. These factors are age, gender and family structure. The child's age is an important factor affecting how well the child deals with the move (Harvey, 1985; Simon, Cook, and Fritz, 1990; Brown and Orthner, 1990). Seidenberg (1973) found that very young children (3 -5 years old) and adolescents (14-16 years old) are more vulnerable to the effects of relocation stress than children of other ages. Gaylord (1979: 188) claimed that very young children often see the move as punitive action by their powerful parents noting that these children are more likely to experience anxiety and anguish because they misunderstand what is happening due to the 'fantasy world they frequently live in'. For adolescents, Goldberg (1980) argues that relocation stress can be doubled as teenagers try to adjust to the new location as well as the changes that adolescence brings. McCluskey (1994: 16) writes that 'adolescents face some of the greatest difficulties in the international move process'. American adolescents living abroad do not have some of the opportunities for beginning independence that adolescents living in the United States have (McCluskey, 1994). One example is that non-IM, U.S.-based adolescents are able to go to work at a younger age than adolescents living abroad. As, Pascoe (1994) commented that the possibility of part-time employment for adolescents overseas is reduced or not available at all. McCluskey (1994) also points out that non-IM, U.S.-based adolescents are able to obtain their driver's license at a younger age than adolescents living abroad. Pascoe (1994) warns IM parents raising children overseas that their adolescents may be more dependent on them. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the effects of international mobility on adolescent development.

Some researchers argue that moving may be harder on adolescents and parents of adolescents (Brett, 1982; Smith, 1991). Brett (1982) observed that mobile adolescents had more physical health problems than adolescents who were more stable in their residence. In terms of social relations, Brett (1982) noted that mobile boys and girls (aged 6-12 years old) had more problems making friends than boys and girls of the same age who were stable in their residence. Although relocation may cause stress for

all involved in the move, careful reflection is needed when considering the potential outcomes for adolescents (Brown and Orthner, 1990; Harvey, 1985). Josselson (1980) asserts that adolescents need a stable environment and social relations with peers as their self-concept is developing. Smith (1991: 71) warns that relocation during adolescence 'can have a detrimental effect on the ability to maintain intimate relationships'. She claims that the adolescent's ability to form and sustain close relationships is underdeveloped. In contrast, younger children may not be as vulnerable to relocation stress as adolescents (Simon, Cook, and Fritz, 1990). Simon, Cook, and Fritz (1990) assert that school-age children (6-12 years of age) seem more open to change and more willing to learn about the world they live in than do older children. The effects of international mobility and the transience of living in an international community on peer relations are explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

Whether relocation can actually harm children is a topic of debate among researchers, psychologists and psychiatrists. Gaylord (1979) asserts that how the family relocates and copes with this stress is more important to the health and welfare of the children than individual events or moves that the child experiences. Winnicott (1986) writes that if children are prepared for relocation and supported through the change, they will be less likely to become clients in treatment for mental health problems. Chapter 6 focuses on how the families in this study manage relocation and in some cases thrive making the most of the opportunities for growth.

There are reported gender differences in how children adjust to relocation (Brown and Orthner, 1990; Brett, 1982; Orthner et al, 1989). Some researchers found that girls are more negatively affected by relocation stress than are boys (Orthner et al, 1989; Brown and Orthner, 1990; Brett, 1982). Brown and Orthner (1990) noted that younger adolescent females experienced depression more than boys in relation to recent moves to a new location and to frequent relocation. Brett (1982) found that parents of 'mobile' girls aged 6 to 14 years stated that their daughters needed to increase their friendship making abilities. In contrast, parents of 'mobile' boys of this age did not report this as an issue (Brett, 1982). Critically, Brett (1982) acknowledged limitations

of her study which include: the data provided about children were based on the perception of parents; and the data were not collected about children who were not 'mobile' to use as a comparison.

More recently, Tucker, Marx, and Long (1998) found that family structure affects how children adjust to relocation, particularly to their new schools. They found that children who had higher rates of relocation did not seem negatively affected in their education when they lived with both biological parents. In contrast to two-parent family structures, Tucker, Marx, and Long (1998) claim that children from single-parent families seem to have more problems in school even if they move only once. It is important to state that many factors can affect how children manage relocation. Researchers need to be cautious in analysing their findings and need to avoid making generalisations.

A large majority of families in my study are two-parent families and most of the children live with their biological parents. Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis explore family structure and the effects of international mobility on the families in my study.

Relocation: Frequency, Recency and Length of 'Tour'

There are many factors which can affect how IM children manage relocation and transience. Marchant and Medway (1987) argue that the frequency and the recency of moving are important factors that have been overlooked by many researchers in past studies. It also is important to note the length of the assignment overseas (Pascoe, 1994; McCluskey, 1994). Pascoe (1994) uses the term 'tour of duty' to describe the length of time children spend abroad. She argues that the 'tour of duty' is an important aspect to consider as the transience experienced by IM families may vary greatly. Pascoe (1994) claims that the level of transience will affect how quickly children adjust to relocation. She writes:

'It is easy to spot the children out in the world for the first time. They have not developed those natural adaptation instincts which help the perpetually moving child cope with new situations' (Pascoe, 1994: 150).

Pascoe (1994) refers to these children as 'first-tour' or 'one-tour-only' children and claims that it usually only takes up to 6 months for these children to blend in with children with high rates of relocation. Furthermore, McCluskey (1994) writes about the significance of assignment length in relation to how families adjust to relocation noting that the range can vary from a brief period of time during which families never leave the 'tourist mentality' to twenty years or more in the same place. McCluskey (1994) refers to families in brief assignments as 'short term sojourners'. Foreign service departments and religious organisations may send their employees and families on lengthy assignments that may last the expatriate's whole career (McCluskey, 1994). There may be problems associated with long-term assignments as well because children may have to deal with frequent partings of the people around them which may predispose them to unresolved grief (Pascoe, 1994; McCluskey, 1994). The significance of 'tour of duty' in relation to my study is explored in Chapter 4.

There are some families who have high rates of relocation and transience, moving every one, two or four years. Gaylord (1979) claims that corporate managers are the most mobile in America and she notes that Toffler (1970) refers to these corporate managers as 'corporate gypsies' and 'new nomads'. Military families also experience high rates of mobility. A review of two military studies will be presented. However, it is not the intention of this thesis to review the literature about military families in depth because participants of my study were IM families who primarily were sponsored by international corporations. For purposes of my study, it is useful to examine research conducted with military families for two reasons. First, many IM families experience as much or more transience as military families do, so findings may be relevant. Second, the U.S. military have consistently conducted research on the effects of relocation resulting in a large body of research. In contrast, the effects of relocation on civilian families have not been investigated thoroughly and consistently. Consequently, there are many gaps and some of the past research conducted is dated.

Due to the high rates of relocation and resulting transience experienced by American military families, U.S. military organisations strongly support the need for continued research on relocation and adjustment to relocation stress. The U.S. Army has an action plan to support research of this nature (Bowen, 1989). Croan et al (1991) note that it is not unusual for some American military families to relocate every three years (U.S. Army). On average, military families relocate four times as often as families not associated with the military (Griffith, Stewart, and Cato, 1988). Wertsch (1991) noted that some military families relocate more frequently than every three years.

Bowen (1989) conducted a large study of 983 military families in the U.S. Army. The sample included both officers and enlisted military personnel in addition to their spouses who had been relocated to an overseas posting in Europe (West Germany). The purpose of their investigation was to determine the key elements that led families to successfully adapt to relocation in overseas postings (Bowen, 1989). Another purpose of the research conducted by Bowen (1989) was to expand upon earlier research conducted by McCubbin and McCubbin (1987). Bowen (1989) analysed responses from the men (military members) and the women (civilian spouses) separately, which was not done in the earlier research by McCubbin and McCubbin (1987). Bowen (1989) postulated that families who were experiencing many stressful events would have more difficulties in adjusting to relocation. Another research hypothesis was that families with a 'high sense of coherence' with the abilities or strengths to adjust to stressors would deal more effectively with the changes of relocation (Bowen, 1989: 3). Bowen (1989: 3) cites the work of Antonovsky (1987) and Antonovsky and Sourani (1988) and states: 'a sense of coherence' is 'the degree to which family members perceive their life as having a degree of order, predictability and manageability'. The majority of families in my study described themselves as being very cohesive, united and experienced what Bowen (1989) referred to as a 'high sense of coherence'.

Not surprisingly, findings revealed that families who had experienced a high number of stressful events or situations, referred to as a 'pile up' of stressors, within the

previous year had more difficulties adjusting to the stress of relocation (Bowen, 1989). Successful adaptation to relocation was strongly influenced by whether the families were realistically prepared for the relocation for the overseas posting (Bowen, 1989). Findings also revealed that when family experiences were congruent with what they were told about the new posting, adjustment to the change was more positive (Bowen, 1989). For example, if what the army told the families about the schools for their children, accommodation for the family, and information about the new assignment matched how the family perceived these in reality, families had less difficulty adjusting to the relocation (Bowen, 1989).

Pittman and Bowen (1994) surveyed 882 adolescents from military families in the U.S. Air Force who had high rates of relocation. This study was one of the largest surveys undertaken with young people from military families in the U.S. Air Force. They examined three specific predictors of adjustment which were: 'Stressors'; 'Perception and use of resources'; and 'Perception of the circumstances surrounding the relocation' (Pittman & Bowen, 1994). They found that the nature of the parent/adolescent relationship had the greatest effect on the adolescent's adaptation to relocation noting that those adolescents who were less defiant and had more open relationships with their parents reported fewer problems adapting to relocation (Pittman and Bowen, 1994). They also found that those adolescents who used their parents to help them cope with the stress of relocation had less turmoil in their adjustment (Pittman and Bowen, 1994). Not surprisingly, these adolescents reported more positive interpersonal relations with their parents than did those who suffered greater difficulties because of relocation (Pittman and Bowen, 1994). These findings are relevant to the outcomes of my study. The parent/adolescent relationship and family strategies or tactics in managing international mobility and transience are examined in Chapter 5.

Recency of the move is important to adolescent adjustment (Brown and Orthner, 1990; Hendershott, 1989; Pittman and Bowen, 1994). Brown and Orthner (1990) investigated the relationship between moving and 'well-being' using a written survey.

They looked specifically at how recent the move was and the number of moves. 720 adolescents (12-14 years old) from five communities in the Southeastern and Southwestern regions of the United States participated in the study. 'Well-being' was measured by assessing 'self-esteem', 'alienation', 'depression', and 'life satisfaction' (Brown and Orthner, 1990, 371). They found that 'life satisfaction' and 'depression' affected the level of 'well-being' more than 'self esteem' and 'alienation'. In addition, findings revealed that 'life satisfaction' was rated lower by female adolescents who experienced recent moves and higher rates of relocation and that these same female adolescents reported higher levels of depression. (Brown and Orthner, 1990). Brown and Orthner (1990) suggest that perhaps female adolescents need more time than male adolescents to adjust to relocation. Brown and Orthner's findings support earlier outcomes by Hendershott (1989) who found that young adolescents were depressed if the relocation was relatively recent (12 months or less). However, Hendershott (1989) did not report a gender difference with regard to depression.

Corporations and other Sponsors

Dependent upon the expatriate's employer or sponsoring organisation, the expatriate's dependent children have names linking them to the sponsoring organisation, such as; 'Oil kids', 'Army brats', 'Missionary kids (MK's)' (Useem and Downie, 1976). Useem and Downie (1976) note that many facets of the families' lives are affected by the sponsoring organisation. For example, there are certain expectations for good conduct and social guidelines to be followed, so as not to negatively impact on the image and reputation of the sponsoring organisation. Non-mobile families are able to lead more private, separate lives than families closely linked to their sponsoring organisation (Useem and Downie, 1976). Some corporations and religious organisations abroad manage schools for their expatriate families further limiting the scope for private space.

Some researchers (Harvey, 1985; Hubbard, 1986) note that prospective expatriates are frequently persuaded to take foreign assignments due to the generous benefit package offered by the corporations. However, a tax-free salary, an opportunity to travel,

housing and education benefits and home leave are not enough to keep many expatriates in the foreign posting. Harvey (1985) and Hubbard (1986) have noted that some families feel that all of these benefits do not make up for the complete life style changes needed to adjust to the foreign culture and new location.

Costs can be expensive when expatriates do not complete their contracts in a new assignment and they return home early (Harvey, 1985). Corporations have been forced to look at this because of the frequency with which failure of the expatriate in the foreign assignment occurs. Some corporations will not release their figures of the rates of failure to complete foreign assignments (Hubbard, 1986). It is estimated that 25% to 40% of American expatriates from the United States do not complete their assignments in foreign posts (Tung, 1982; Tung, 1984). Tung (1982) compared American, West European, and Japanese expatriates working in a foreign culture. Tung (1982) examined how these expatriates were chosen for their foreign posts, and she also looked at how corporations prepared their expatriate employees to live and work in a foreign culture. She found that Japanese expatriates had significantly lower failure rates in their foreign assignments noting the failure rate was less than 5%. According to Patrick Lloyd, Director of the Centre for International Briefing (CIB) in the United Kingdom, one in seven European expatriates do not complete their foreign assignments cited in Hubbard, 1986. The CIB specialises in preparing expatriates for the changes involved in living and working with a foreign culture (Hubbard, 1986).

One of the major reasons given for the failure of the American expatriate to complete an assignment is that the family does not adjust to the relocation. This failure to adjust has been attributed to 'culture shock' (Stuart, 1992; Harvey, 1985; Hubbard, 1986). Stuart (1992) points out that some failure to adjust is associated with adolescents changing schools. In her research, Tung (1982) identified some of the reasons expatriates fail to complete their foreign assignment and return to their home culture early. She also looked to identify the reasons why Japanese expatriates have the lowest reported failure rate of foreign assignment. Tung (1982) found that the primary reason for Japanese failure to adjust is the expatriate's inability to adapt to the new

work environment. In contrast, the primary reason American expatriates fail in their new assignments is due to unhappiness of the spouse and children (Tung, 1982,1984). Tung (1982: 68) comments that the failure of Japanese expatriates to complete an overseas assignment is infrequently due to inability of the spouse to adapt to the relocation noting that 'this does not come as a surprise because of the role and status to which Japanese culture relegates the spouse'. Furthermore, Hubbard (1986) commented on expatriate failure in foreign posts and attributed this to insensitivity to foreign cultures. This may be detrimental to corporations as failure to effectively handle foreign assignments may damage the corporation's reputation; affect the quality and quantity of the product; and cause irreparable problems with the staff (Harvey, 1985; Hubbard, 1986).

It is claimed that Japanese corporations carefully select and vigorously train prospective expatriates for overseas assignments (Tung, 1984). Tung points out that the low failure rate is noteworthy because the Japanese 'by culture and history do not readily mix with foreigners' (Tung, 1984: 134). She also found that Japanese corporations were more realistic about how long it could take for expatriates to adjust to a foreign culture and assignment overseas. On average, the usual length for an overseas assignment for Japanese expatriates is 4.67 years as compared to American expatriates who may have a foreign assignment for two years (Tung, 1984). Another factor identified that may explain low failure rates of Japanese expatriates is that Japanese managers socialise with their employees, get to know them and their family situations, and these managers are very selective in choosing an employee for an overseas assignment (Tung, 1984).

There are other factors that may contribute to the problem of not adjusting to a foreign posting. Hubbard (1986) found that it was not uncommon for expatriates to be given news of the transfer and international relocation two months prior to the move. There have even been cases where the notice to relocate is one to two weeks before the transfer which consequently leads to the family staying behind and the expatriate moving without the family initially to begin the foreign assignment (Harvey, 1985).

In addition, researchers note that there are problems in selection and screening as well ineffective or non-existent training to prepare expatriates and their families for relocation (Tung, 1982, 1984; Harvey, 1985; Hubbard, 1986). There is an urgent need for corporations to do more to promote a positive family adjustment to the relocation (Beck, 1992; Gaylord, 1979; Tung, 1982, 1984; Harvey, 1985). Beck (1992: 124) argues that corporations need to employ more 'co-operative types of mobility' in place of 'individual mobility', whereby spouses are assisted to find suitable employment as part of the relocation package. Harvey (1985) notes that progressive corporations have developed adjustment programs for the expatriate and in some cases, the whole family is included in the program. Simon, Cook & Fritz (1990) emphasise the importance of preparing the whole family, particularly in light of their key finding that preparation of the mother decreases the 'culture shock' of the children.

Parental Guilt and Worry

Even though there are many positive benefits of living abroad as a family unit, parents may feel guilty and they may worry about the possible negative consequences relocation can have on their children. Although parents consider their children's needs when deciding about whether to relocate or not, career and financial implications usually take priority (Brown and Orthner, 1990). Lefkow (1994), a foreign service diplomat, admits that he and his spouse made a major mistake when they moved each of their three children back to the United States to complete the last year of high school. He states: 'It can be wrenching to watch one's children return to American schools and find themselves out of place and out of touch' (Lefkow, 1994: 33). Lefkow (1994) also questioned whether his choice of career in the foreign service was the right choice for his family. As a diplomat in the foreign service, he and his family lived in six countries during a thirty year period with foreign assignments in India, England, Kenya and France.

Gordon and Jones stated that one IM woman in their study expressed her concerns about her children in this way:

> We move from country to country because we accept the idea that it is an aspect of today's world. We…fear they will grow up…with no sense of place

> or belonging…which will cause them irreparable harm. (qtd. in Langford, 1999: 32)

Parents in my study experienced guilt and worried about their children's welfare. These themes are explored in more depth in Chapter 4.

'The typical overseas child lives in a constant transient status and may never have the opportunity to set down deep roots in any community' (Werkman et al, 1982: 55). On this issue, Useem and Downie (1976) admit that some young people, who lead transient lives, can have serious mental health problems that require professional treatment. However, they contend that mental health problems are not more prevalent in this group as compared to other youth their age. Werkman (1986) comments on the incidence of mental health problems in individuals overseas as follows:

> As the prevalence and incidence of psychiatric disorders in the United States . cannot be stated accurately, it is even more difficult to estimate the number of such disturbances overseas. (Werkman, 1986: 6).

Another issue of concern to parents living with their children overseas is that very often they are unable to consult with their extended family about child rearing issues. Many of the parents' parents do not have experience of living abroad and bringing up children overseas. In addition, siblings of the parents are not able to help with a problem or concern with their niece or nephew for the same reason (Pascoe, 1994). Pascoe (1994) cautions that children may perceive the guilt some parents have about relocation and may use this to get their own way. As a result, some parents may not discipline their children when needed (Pascoe, 1994; Werkman et al, 1982).

Family Unity and Cohesiveness

Some researchers have found that families who relocate frequently tend to describe themselves as being very close and having a high degree of family unity (Useem and Downie, 1976; Harvey, 1985; Werkman, 1972, 1975). Useem and Downie (1976) point out that for TCK's who relocate frequently, every year or two, the only constant, stable relationship for these young people is with the parents. Their research revealed that 'approximately 90% of TCK's like, respect, and feel emotionally attached to their

parents' (Useem and Downie, 1976: 104). Hausman and Reed (1991) note that when people move, they leave behind significant persons and environments that helped them feel secure and important. They write:

> Relying on each other in adjusting to a new situation indicates a willingness of the family to provide a sense of security and meaning in a new situation. (Hausman and Reed, 1991: 255)

When families are faced with the changes of relocation, they work hard to help each other and this action draws them closer together (Useem and Downie, 1976). 'They share the common experience of moving into unfamiliar territory and offer each other mutual support in the face of change and strangeness' (Useem and Downie, 1994: 67). Smith (1991: 71) concurs and claims that 'family cohesiveness serves as a defence against the anxiety experienced when one lives in a strange culture'. Wallach and Metcalf (1994: 92) state: '... the nuclear family becomes the 'anchor', the source of stability in a changing environment'. Chapters 4 and 5 examine this theme in depth.

The experience of living abroad may increase family unity and marital strength if these qualities were sound prior to the relocation (Harvey, 1985). Werkman (1972, 1975) found that IM young people generally have sound family relationships. Useem and Downie (1976) claimed that American families living abroad were closer and more cohesive than American families living in the United States. They noted that American families abroad spend more time together and that often this time was quality time, such as, travel together (Useem and Downie, 1976). In addition, generous benefit packages allow many families to be able to afford household help and in some cases, servants allowing parents to spend more time with their children (Useem and Downie, 1976). Smith (1991: 70) also noted that American families living abroad spend more time together, but she claims it is because they are 'isolated from other American families'. She also suggests that families may spend more time together and become more cohesive because, in some situations, they are representing their home country and the sponsoring organisation who sent them abroad (Smith, 1991). Smith (1991) contends that in cases like this their lives are less private and more public, and the family unit is much more visible.

In contrast to increasing family cohesiveness and unity, it is also possible for families to move farther apart during relocation. Pascoe (1994: 116) comments that 'family members are thrown together whether they want to be or not'. Hausman and Reed (1991) point out that if families have communication problems and are not satisfied with their relationships, the stress of moving often intensifies problems with adjustment and degree of crises. Harvey (1985) cautions that families with serious problems who leave their home country can frequently encounter catastrophe in the new location. Family pressures may increase if there are marital problems as these problems are more obvious when living abroad due to the family unit being smaller (Pascoe, 1994). She also notes that children may feel more vulnerable in these situations. Werkman et al (1982) warn that a closer relationship between mother and adolescent may lead to conflict as the closeness may intensify tensions. McCaig notes the complexities associated with increased family cohesiveness:

> Since the family is the only consistent unit that moves through time and place, the family members are thrown back on one another in a way that they are not in a geographically rooted situation. They become far more dependent on one another... practically and psychologically. This can have very positive implications, but it can also mean that any dysfunction that exists is exacerbated because of the intense emotional involvement of family members. They don't have the same safety valves or resources (such as other relatives or close friends to take the children for short periods) for dealing with these problems. (qtd. in McCluskey, 1994: 27)

Children may experience intense insecurity and over reliance on their parents which can lead 'family members to turn to one another instead of the outside world' (Werkman, 1986: 279). Pascoe (1994) claims that children's dependence on parents is heightened when living overseas due to children being 'uprooted' and relocated to an unfamiliar place. Over reliance and dependence on parents as a consequence of relocation are examined in Chapters 4 and 5.

Increased family unity may be especially challenging for young people who are experiencing the changes of adolescence and are beginning to develop some independence from the family and establish their own identities. Rigamer states:

> Teens rebel. They find everything difficult, in part because of developmental tasks that they must accomplish: separating from the family and gaining their personal identity…Kids return to the bosom of the family, which is great for family unity, but he/she is not separating him/herself and asserting him/herself or becoming more autonomous. (qtd. in McCluskey, 1994: 16)

Family communication patterns and family management styles may affect how families adapt to change (Hausman and Reed, 1991). Families who can discuss their feelings and support each other during relocation may adapt to the changes more easily and quickly than do families who have more authoritarian styles of management and less open communication patterns (Anderson and Stark, 1988). Families who are in agreement about the significance of and rationale for the relocation and who work together to adjust positively to the relocation can find that their feelings and actions may increase their cohesiveness as a family unit (Hausman & Reed, 1991). Family tactics for managing relocation and transience are explored further in Chapter 5.

'Sense of Belonging' and 'Home'

A frequent theme in the literature review on relocation is the difficulty for some IM children to identify a place they call 'home' and/or 'a sense of belonging' to a place (Gerner et al., 1992; Killham, 1990; Pascoe, 1994). Gerner et al (1992) acknowledge the problems that can result when individuals are requested to identify their 'home country' on a questionnaire. In many cases, 'home' may represent a country that the individual holds a passport for; the country where the individual has resided the most years; the birth country or the place that the individual feels the most attachment to. Gerner et al (1992) avoided these problems in their research of identifying 'home' by requesting that participants choose the country they feel they belong to. Out of their large sample, only two respondents identified more than one country as 'home.' 'Home' may be more than one place (Killham, 1990). 'Home is everywhere and nowhere' (Fail, 1994: 35). Fail (1994) surveyed 38 international school alumnae of different nationalities about the effects of international school education. She found that these alumnae equated 'sense of belonging' to their interpersonal relations with people instead of with a geographic place (Fail, 1994). Pollock states: 'For TCKs, home is where they feel at home' (qtd. in Pascoe, 1994: 168).

Killham (1990: 5) notes that 'Global nomads' or 'TCKs' may have difficulty responding to the question: 'Where are you from?' 'Home becomes not a geographic notion, but an emotional one' (Killham, 1990: 5). Wertch (1991) claims that military children are challenged and have difficulty with the ideas of 'home' and 'roots' due to high rates of relocation. Pascoe (1994) points out that 'home' can be an 'object' or perhaps a 'memory' for children and that these concepts of 'home' represent the mobile lives they lead; the concept of 'home' is portable. She notes that 'home' for the children may be different than 'home' for the children's parents (Pascoe, 1994). In my study, there were a variety of perceptions and perspectives about the concept of 'home', 'roots' and a 'sense of belonging'. In Chapter 5, accounts from the adolescents and parents in the study are presented. McCluskey (1994) states that the 'culture' of the children may be different than 'culture' of the parents. It is important that parents are flexible about their children's 'culture' and do not force their 'culture' on the children (McCluskey, 1994). Parents need to be mindful of this when trying to provide 'roots' for their children (Pascoe, 1994).

Some IM youth may feel the urge to move every few years which Useem refers to as 'having sand in their shoe' (qtd. in Killham, 1990: 5). IM youth may experience 'rootlessness' in their professional lives as well as in relationships with others as they yearn for change (Useem and Downie, 1976; Killham, 1990; Pascoe, 1994; McCluskey, 1994). 'Rootlessness' can cause tension and possibly failure in marital relations (Killham, 1990; Useem and Downie, 1976; Lykins, 1986). Rigamer warns of potential detrimental effects to the psychological health of children from a lack of 'roots' and states:

> …A sense of roots…a sense of connection with the extended family and the home are all very important. You cannot give these up. The children really need to be rooted or grounded in their home culture. They need to spend time with their extended family. (qtd. in McCluskey, 1994: 24)

McCluskey (1994) notes that Rigamer rejects the idea that some children are 'international children' with no specific point of origin and believes strongly that

children need to have a sense of where they come from and who their people are. Chapter 5 explores the nature of 'roots' and how the IM families in my study establish and maintain their 'roots'.

Some global nomads do not establish themselves in any one place or in relationships with others. They live in a temporary mode, ready to move at a moment's notice (Killham, 1990; Pascoe, 1994). Pascoe (1994: 174) contends that children with high rates of relocation have developed a 'migratory instinct' that stays with them the remainder of their lives. It is not usual for TCKs to attend two colleges during their undergraduate education and change employment frequently (Pascoe, 1994). Useem and Downie (1976) found that most TCKs pursue professions that will continue their international lifestyles. They contend that the reason for this is that TCKs feel 'at home' in the third culture (Useem & Downie, 1976). TCKs can usually adapt wherever they are, but they don't fully integrate themselves (Fail, 1996). Critically, Pollock (1994) writes about the importance of cultivating the 'roots' of IM children. He states:

> Mobility in itself is not the problem; it is the inner drive to be in constant motion that may be disruptive and sometimes destructive. The delicate 'root system' of the global nomad's life - based on relationships, not geography - needs to be tended. (Pollock, 1994: 73)

Re-entry

A common topic or theme in the literature is the difficulty faced by young people who re-enter their supposed 'home country' (Useem and Downie, 1976; Werkman, 1986; Lefkow, 1994; Pascoe, 1994; Smith, 1991). Useem and Downie (1976) note that stories describing the problems experienced upon re-entry sound as if these young people are aliens to the country they are returning to. Although adults also experience difficulty with re-entry, it is particularly poignant for young people. Some TCKs may feel out of touch and feel they don't belong and they are often unable to relate to other young people their age (Useem and Downie, 1976). Smith (1991) surveyed 300 American adults who had grown up overseas as children. She interviewed these adults about their childhood overseas and their experience of returning to the United States at

an older age. Smith (1991) refers to these American adults as 'repatriates' and also calls them the 'Absentee Americans' in her book. She states:

> Many repatriates feel restless and unsettled. They believe they are unable to establish permanent roots, yet at the same time they express a desire to do so. They experience a conflict between the desire to understand the community in which they are living and yearning for new experiences in other cultures. Some admit to wanting to establish roots but not knowing how. (Smith, 1991: 86-87)

In contrast, there are those who try to establish 'roots'. Smith (1991) argues that some individuals have experienced so much change while they growing up that they find it very difficult to relocate as adults. They do, however, yearn for their former cultural experiences and overseas lives (Smith, 1991). She also notes that perhaps the reason friendships are so important for IM young people are that friendships take the place of the 'roots' they don't have (Smith, 1991). Problems with re-entry is not limited to American repatriates (Matthews, 1989). Kobayashi (1986) has documented the problems of re-entry for 10,000 Japanese students returning annually to Japan after living abroad. Matthew (1989) concurs and notes that Japanese repatriates are sometimes shunned and treated as outcasts because:

> …their social behaviour has lost some of its precision and nuance – a bow may be a little too shallow or a mode of address insufficiently circumspect and deferential - and great efforts must be made to eliminate the contamination of foreign culture (Matthew, 1989: 28).

The Role of Global Nomads in the 21st Century

The organisations that work with IM families to support them in their transient lives report positive and negative characteristics of IM young people. They argue that some of these youth experience 'rootlessness', persistent bereavement from the continual loss of friends, and instability in their relationships with others (Killham, 1990). On the positive side, Killham (1990) reports that the support organisations claim that global nomads possess special skills with learning language, demonstrate adaptability and perseverance, and are more worldly as compared to others who are more stable in their residence. McCluskey (1994: 26) notes that IM young people demonstrate 'commitment to community' and a 'greater comfort with diversity'. Willis et al

(1994) refer to IM young people as 'transnationals' and 'transculturals'. They believe that these young people will play an important role in the 21st century.

> ...We would posit, though, that instead of being seen as running a gauntlet of 'shocks,' transnationals/transculturals be viewed as having special insights into and skills for dealing with people and relationships that others who were not raised in a multicultural setting either do not have or do not have at such a level of sophistication. They have more insights about their own identity, value structure, and communication patterns, insights which should offer significant contributions to education in the 21st century. (Willis et al, 1994: 38)

Conclusion

This chapter has considered some of the key debates in the literature related to families in transition. While some of the early literature has tended to see transience generally in negative terms for the family and notably for mothers and children, recent findings are more positive.

What does emerge as important is the degree of preparedness, the capacity of the family to 'manage' this change and their capacity to support the differing needs of all members of the family.

It is evident that families with extended degrees of social, emotional and financial capital may well be better placed to deal with transience, and it is worth signalling that the females in my study are middle-class professional. However, aspects within the host nation can also accelerate and promote adaptation as well as increase experiences of stress. Schools and schooling provide one such setting and it is to a consideration of this matter that the study now turns.

CHAPTER 2

FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

Introduction

The empirical work in my thesis considers the ways in which aspects of parental involvement in formal education can play a crucial role in the lives of internationally mobile families. Thus, in this chapter, I focus on the key research and literature which explores the parent-school relationship more generally. In what follows, I draw mainly on work undertaken in the US which explores what is meant by parental involvement, what forms this can take as well as some of the constraints involved.

In this chapter, I do not consider research into parental-school involvement in an internationally mobile context. Rather, I focus on research which underlines the contribution made by this connection more generally. Much of the work identifies points of high/low involvement as well as the shifting nature of involvement over time. In addition, much of the research has concentrated on the views of parents and teachers with little work being undertaken into the perspectives of children and older school students. However, the fundamental finding is that sharing understandings between home and the school is of great benefit to the educational and emotional progress of children.

A minor thrust of this chapter will explore some of the research into home-school links in respect of Personal and Social Education (PSE) as this area of the curriculum served as a pivot for my empirical work.

Parent involvement (PI) in schools is a term used to describe a range of diverse activities parents engage in to support their child's formal education. Jowett and Baginsky (1988) note that a common focus of parental involvement in schools is one of bringing together and bridging the gap between home and school. Some of the terms used in the literature include the following: 'Home-School Collaboration' (Leitch and

Tangri, 1988), 'Parent Participation' (Comer, 1986), 'School/Family/Community Partnership' (Epstein, 1995). Gareau and Sawatzky (1995) note that the term 'parent involvement', commonly used to describe parents involved with schools in some manner up until the mid-1980s is in many cases, being replaced by terms like 'family-school partnership' or 'parent-school collaboration'. These changes in terminology reflect the trend for 'parent involvement' in education to emphasise the changing relationship between parent and schools toward more of an equal partnership (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995). They regard 'collaboration' as:

> ...a broader and more inclusive term than parent involvement because the latter term focuses mainly on the parents' role, whereas the former term focuses on the relationship between the home and the school and how parents and educators work together toward common goals. (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995: 463)

Epstein (1995) asserts that partnerships between Home/School/Community are critical because they help children develop and succeed not only in their education, but in their lives as well. She writes: 'When parents, students, teachers, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work' (Epstein, 1995: 701).

Involvement may range from parents attending parent/teacher conference days and social events at school to a much higher level of involvement where parents are equal partners with schools. Parents communicating with their children about their schoolwork and setting high expectations for their children's learning are also considered as forms of parent involvement (Keith and Lichtman, 1994). They note that 'unfortunately, parent involvement is a vague term with a multitude of meanings' (Keith and Lichtman, 1994: 257). Keith and Lichtman (1994) and Keith and Keith (1993) contend that discrepancies in research findings about parental involvement may stem from the way researchers have defined and examined parent involvement in education.

Reasons for Involvement of Parents in Children's Education

Baker (1997) conducted a qualitative study in the US to explore how and why parents are involved in their children's education. In addition, she looked at barriers to

involvement. 111 parents from diverse backgrounds participated in Baker's study. She used interviewing as her data collection method and obtained over 500 pages of transcripts from interviews.

Many parents feel the need to be involved in school as advocates for their children when their children are experiencing a problem (Baker, 1997). She noted that parents do not view their involvement at these times as 'an end in itself', but as a way of working out a problem. Baker (1997) found that parents felt strongly that they need to be 'advocates' for their children at all times and not just when there is a problem. Many parents felt that they were 'experts on their children' and had knowledge about their children that the teachers did not have (Baker, 1997). She noted that parents felt that they were prevented from helping teachers learn about their children in terms of how they learn and their strengths and skills due to a lack of school policy and procedure to do so (Baker, 1997).

> Parents believed that they were the most stable and continuous force in the lives of their children and that involvement in the schools provided a means for the child to experience a continuous flow through the day, week, and year (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999: 13).

A major finding of Baker's study (1997) was that parents viewed their involvement in schools as a way of promoting co-operation and open communication between themselves and the school. Trust between parents and teachers increases when families and schools work together (Epstein, 1995). Comer (1986) found that parents gained 'a sense of belonging' to the school community. Parents believed the end result of their involvement in schools would directly or indirectly benefit their children (Baker, 1997). She cites one example of this as when parents perform tasks to help the teachers, so that teachers have more time to teach the children.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler (1997) posit that parents become active in their children's education because they 'construe the parental role' as including involvement in their child's learning. Parents create this role based on what they believe parents should do for their children and this role may be influenced by their past experience with their

own parents as models or by other parental behaviour that they witness (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997). They note:

> ...This construction of the parental role is important because it enables the parent to imagine, anticipate, and act on a host of educationally related activities with their children. (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997: 313).

For some parents, their involvement in schools is a way of communicating to their children that education means a great deal to them and that school and learning are very important parts of life (Baker, 1997).

Efficacy of Parents to Help Their Children Learn

Some researchers have explained the 'efficacy' of parents in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997; Eccles and Harold, 1993). If parents believe that they can help their children learn and that this will make a difference, parents are more likely to become involved (Ames et al, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997). Eccles and Harold (1993) and Delgada-Gaitan (1992) have found the 'construction of a parental role' to be a significant component in the development of parent involvement in children's education. Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler (1997: 313) contend that 'parents become involved because they have a 'sense of personal efficacy' for helping their children succeed in school' and they assert that a 'sense of efficacy' is an essential prerequisite for the development of parent involvement activity. Furthermore, they suggest that this 'sense of efficacy' originates from:

> ...the direct experience of success in other involvement or involvement-related activities; the vicarious experience of others' success in involvement or involvement-related activities; verbal persuasion by others that involvement activities are worthwhile and can be accomplished by the parent and the emotional arousal induced when issues of importance to the parent are 'on the line'. (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997: 313-314).

The age of the child/level of schooling may significantly affect parents' beliefs as to whether or not they can effectively help their children learn (Epstein, 1987). Epstein (1986) found that parents are not as confident in helping their children with learning activities at home as their children reach an older age. Furthermore, Epstein (1986) observed that even parents with higher levels of education felt a lack of confidence in

working with their older aged children. In an earlier study, parents reported a lack of knowledge and comprehension on their part about their adolescent's high school courses (Stallworth and Williams, 1982). Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler (1997) stress the need for an increase in parent involvement in the education of adolescents. In addition, Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler (1997) acknowledge the significance of parent beliefs about their role in the education of their children. Important considerations for parents would include whether their involvement would be advantageous to their child's learning and the appropriateness of being involved in their adolescent's education (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997). It has been found that some teachers criticise parents for the minimal or lack of parent involvement at the high school level (Epstein, 1991).

Parental expertise to promote their child's learning at home may vary (Epstein, 1987). Epstein (1987) also observed that some schools offer training and advice to parents on how to make their home environment one that promotes the child's education, but this was not widespread. Stallworth and Williams (1982) claim that parents would be more involved in their children's education if they received more direction and guidance from teachers. Epstein (1987) noted that teachers who were more experienced in having parents work with their children on learning activities at home were successful working with parents of all educational backgrounds. These teachers were referred to as 'teacher leaders' and were viewed by parents and school administrators as having more teaching expertise (Epstein, 1987). She found that other teachers who were not as experienced using parent involvement teaching strategies 'at home' reported that parents who have not completed their education at the secondary level are less skilful and less eager to work with their children at home (Epstein, 1987).

The age of the child and level of schooling may be the most significant factor related to teacher's use of parental involvement (Epstein, 1995). However, the grade level of the child does not necessarily have to be a barrier to parent involvement (Dauber and Epstein, 1993; Epstein, 1995). Findings suggest that as children leave primary or elementary school and progress through the grades, teachers are much less likely to

offer parents opportunities to be involved in their child's education (Epstein, 1986; Stallworth and Williams, 1982). Consequently, as opportunities decrease, school subjects become more advanced leading parents to question their ability to help their children (Henry, 1996). So, parents may not know how to be involved in their child's education as their children progress on to middle and high school. Grade level as a barrier to involvement of parents in their child's education may be overcome (Hollifield, 1995; Dauber and Epstein, 1993). Hollifield (1995) writes:

> The school's practices to inform and to involve parents are more important than parent education, family size, marital status, and even grade level in determining whether inner-city parents get involved with their children's education. (Hollifield, 1995: 14).

Types of Involvement in Children's Education

Epstein (1995) defined and grouped school and family partnerships into six categories or types of practices initiated by parents and schools together (see Table 1). Partnerships between families and schools need to include opportunities for involvement at home and at school (Epstein, 1995).

Table 1.

Six Types of Involvement for School/Family Partnerships

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6
Parenting	Communicating	Volunteering	Learning at Home	Decision Making	Collaborating with Community

Epstein, J. (1995) pp. 701-712.

The first two categories are basic requirements, 'parenting' and 'communicating' that apply to all parents and all schools. Parents are obliged to meet the basic needs of their children (i.e. food, shelter) as well as establish a home environment that is conducive to learning (Epstein, 1995). Epstein emphasises that schools must inform parents about school schemes and about their child's performance in school. So, parents need to 'parent' their children and there needs to be two-way communication between parents and schools. Epstein identified a third category of parent involvement, 'volunteering' that includes parents helping in the classroom; attending meetings and workshops at

school; and attending school plays and other events at school. The fourth category, 'learning at home' consists of parents working on learning activities with their children 'at home' with or without guidance from the teacher (Epstein, 1995). Baker (1997) found that many parents direct, monitor, and guide their children with their homework and referred to these parents as 'homework managers'. Baker (1997) noted that some parents even sit down with their children and do the homework with them. This issue was an area of concern and uncertainty for many parents as they struggled with decisions about how much and in what ways they should manage their children's homework (Baker, 1997). In the Baker study (1997), there were parents who were not involved in their children's homework at all. These parents felt that homework was their child's responsibility and this was between their children and the teachers.

The fifth category involves 'decision making' (Epstein, 1995). Parent involvement in this category involves parents serving in decision-making roles for the school, possibly on the school board or committee work. On this issue, Baker (1997) found that very few of the 111 parent participants in her study had knowledge of this type of involvement and some parents had no awareness that this type of involvement was available at all. Examples of parents involved in school governance included parents functioning on school committees with decision-making power in conducting how the school was managed; evaluating the effectiveness of teachers; and making decisions about curriculum. Baker's (1997) findings support earlier research by Blakely and Stearns (1986) and Chavkin and Williams (1993) who noted that few parents were involved at the level of school governance. Comer (1986) and the Yale Child Study Team incorporated parents in governance as a necessary level of 'parent participation' in their work with the New Haven public school system in Connecticut. The result of this action was that parents who were involved directly in school decision making as well as parents who were not involved directly in this process, but were aware of its existence felt an 'increased sense of acceptance and belonging' (Comer, 1986: 445). Epstein (1995: 704) refers to her sixth category of involvement as 'collaborating with community' which would mean that schools and parents work together to: '…identify

and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development'.

It is not uncommon for researchers to study parent involvement activities 'at school' and to omit other important areas of parent involvement which include the basic needs of children and open communication lines between schools and parents (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999). Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) warn that schools frequently concentrate on parent involvement in education 'at school' and overlook parent involvement in education 'at home'. Comer (1986) and the Yale Child Study Team who were advocates of parent involvement 'at school' successfully improved 'school climate' and student achievement in inner city schools in Hartford, Connecticut. However, there was no mention of parent involvement in working with their children 'at home' as a component of their program (Comer, 1986). On this issue, Epstein (1987) believes strongly that 'at home' involvement is critical to reach the majority of parents.

Parent Involvement and Academic Achievement of Children

Snodgrass (1991) claims that parents may not always comprehend the significance of the part they play in their child's educational development and that some parents may presume that schools can be substituted for the home in teaching their children. However, Snodgrass (1991) argues that this presumption is not documented in research study findings. She suggests that children have the best chance of academic success when there is involvement both from school and home. Furthermore, she argues that school and home cannot be separated. Bevevino (1988) notes the importance of the home environment to child development and Snodgrass (1991) concurs:

> ...87% of a child's waking hours, from the time of birth to age 18, are under the influence of the home environment' (Snodgrass, 1991: 83).

The home affects the child's growth and development in school. Snodgrass (1991) contends that parents who continue to be involved in the child's development in school promote their child's academic development in school. Schurr (1992) notes:

> When parents are involved with schools, their children's achievement improves, regardless of whether the parents are college-educated or grade school graduates. (Schurr, 1992: 4)

Epstein (1991) investigated how parent involvement practices used by teachers affected student performance on standardised achievement tests over time (Epstein, 1991). She examined data from 293 students in 3rd and 5th grades attending schools in Baltimore, Maryland who sat for achievement tests in reading and math during the 1980-81 academic year. Epstein (1991) found that students scored higher in reading on achievement tests when their teachers involved parents in the educational process more often. This pattern was not found with math or other subjects (Epstein, 1987). In an earlier study conducted by Becker and Epstein (1982), findings demonstrated that teachers often involve parents in home activities with their children to help them learn to read. In addition, teachers reported parent involvement in reading activities as the most enjoyable involvement for parents (Becker and Epstein, 1982). Becker and Epstein (1982) found that principals encourage parent involvement in reading more than any other subject.

Discrepancies have been found in research findings which relate parent involvement to student achievement and Keith and Keith (1993) claim that these discrepancies are inconsistencies in the way 'learning' and 'parent involvement' are defined. Keith and Keith (1993) looked to examine if parent involvement would effect the education of 8th grade students. They used the data from The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS). The NELS data was taken from 24,000 8th grade students, their parents, teachers, and school administrators in the United States (Keith and Keith, 1993). They found that there was significant improvement in grade eight students' achievement when their parents were involved in their education. Specifically, the improvement was observed in the students' scores on standardised achievement tests (Keith and Keith, 1993). They suggest that the one explanation for the improvement in scores was due to parents encouraging their children to do their homework. Another influencing factor leading to improvement in scores was parents' setting high expectations for their children (Keith and Keith, 1993).

Walberg (1991) has been concerned about lower ratings on achievement tests for U.S. children as contrasted with other nations. He cites the lack of time spent on homework as a significant factor in the low achievement test scores of students in the United States and Sweden. Educators are studying the Japanese educational system in search of a strategy to improve education in the United States (Walberg, 1991). He notes:

> Among advanced countries, Japan spends the least on education but has the lowest dropout rates and top achievement test rankings. (Walberg, 1991: 13-14).

The Japanese academic year is longer than most countries and Walberg (1991) claims that Japanese children study and do more work at home. Furthermore, Japanese teachers visit their students' homes to update the parents on their children's progress as well as work with the parents on how they can promote a home environment conducive to learning (Walberg, 1991). He also notes that parents are invited to come to classes in school to see how their children perform (Walberg, 1991).

Scott Stein and Thorkildsen (1999) examined over fifty research studies about parent involvement and student achievement and concluded that many researchers have exaggerated their findings. In many of the correlational studies, exaggerated claims were made for parental involvement/student achievement relationships (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999). They observed that in many of the correlational studies, control over variables was lacking. Keith and Keith (1993) have also found similar inconsistencies in this sort of research. Furthermore, Ryan and Adams (1995) note that as a whole, research about parent involvement in education is:

> ...largely unintegrated and underutilised...the large variety of constructs that have been investigated, let alone even more strategies that researchers have used to measure these constructs, leaves the would-be reviewer of the literature gasping. (Ryan and Adams, 1995: 5).

Barriers to Parent Involvement in Education

Many researchers note that parental involvement in schools is valuable and beneficial (Eccles and Harold, 1993; Baker, 1997). Eccles and Harold (1993) explored the reasons

why some parents are minimally involved in schools or not involved at all. They found that obstacles to parent involvement in schools originate from the parents themselves or from sources external to parents.

> Lack of family involvement can stem from various parent characteristics and experiences, such as lack of time, energy, and/or economic resources; lack of knowledge; feelings of incompetence; failure to understand the role parents can play; or a long history of negative interactions with the schools that have left parents suspicious of, and disaffected from, the schools. (Eccles and Harold, 1993: 569)

Lack of time and financial means may be potential barriers to parent involvement in education (Baker, 1997; Eccles and Harold, 1993). In addition, Baker (1997) notes that single parents, parents who both work, and parents of young, pre-school children may find it more difficult to be involved at school. Arranging for childcare and transportation to and from schools were issues for parents (Baker, 1997). Earlier findings of Stallworth and Williams (1982) also identified parents needing to arrange childcare for their young children at home and lack of time as possible obstacles to parent involvement in education. However, parents in Baker's study reported that these factors were not major barriers to parent involvement in education. Baker (1997) notes that many parents felt guilty about their level of involvement. Epstein (1987) suggests that schools need to promote parent involvement 'at home' more often than involvement 'at school' in order to reach the majority of parents. In addition, she contends that the primary focus of parent involvement in education needs to address how to help parents work effectively at home with their individual children instead of the whole student community (Epstein, 1987).

In one study, there was evidence that fathers were not as involved in their children's education as mothers were (Epstein, 1995). However, Epstein (1995) argues that fathers could be more involved if schools developed more flexible, family oriented parent involvement programs that are not based predominately 'at school' (Epstein, 1995). Nord et al (1997) found that mothers were more involved than fathers in families with both parents present. However, fathers in single-parent households were involved in their children's education as much as mothers in single-parent households

(Nord et al, 1997). Dauber and Epstein (1993) point out that although single parents and mothers who work outside the home are not frequently involved in their children's education 'at school', they are more apt to work with their children on school activities 'at home'.

Researchers have found that parents from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are less involved in their children's education than parents from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999). Smrekar's research (1992) suggests this disparity in the level of parent involvement from different socio-economic backgrounds can be overcome by schools exploring ways in which a 'sense of community' can be developed. Schools need to problem solve and develop ways that encourage family involvement regardless of socio-economic background. Epstein (1995) supports Smrekar (1992) and asserts that economically disadvantaged communities can have effective parent involvement programs if schools and educators work with these communities to develop positive home-school relations. For example, Comer (1986) and the Yale Child Study Team demonstrated how schools can develop better home-school relations and an effective 'parent participation' program in the Hartford, Connecticut school system. Comer and the Yale Child Study Center team worked with inner city, public, elementary schools serving black families at or near the poverty level. He and his team observed dramatic improvement in student achievement, increased parent involvement in schools as well as improvement in school and community atmosphere (Comer, 1986).

External sources that may present as barriers to parental involvement in schools include lack of encouragement by schools and/or teachers to involve parents; animosity toward parents; a lack of insight as to how to involve parents; and disinterest in involving parents (Eccles and Harold, 1993). In a study conducted in Washington's District of Columbia, almost half of junior high school teachers involved in the study cited parental unconcern and indifference as major obstacles to parent involvement in schools (Leitch and Tangri, 1988). These findings refuted earlier findings that 'slow progress in parent involvement is not due to parents' apathy or disinterest' (Stallworth and Williams,

1982: 24). Dauber and Epstein (1993) surveyed 171 teachers and parents in eight inner city schools in Baltimore, Maryland and found that the parents unanimously expressed their desire to be involved in their children's education. They noted that there was no difference in the level of interest among parents from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds (Dauber and Epstein, 1993).

Parent involvement in schools is described as a process that changes over time and may fluctuate depending on the child's age and level of schooling. Researchers report a common trend is that parent involvement in schools declines as the children progress through elementary school and on to secondary schools (Epstein, 1986, 1987; Dauber and Epstein, 1993). On this issue, Stouffer (1992) writes:

> Sometime between fifth and eighth grades, we lose significant numbers of parents who had previously been at least somewhat involved in the academic and co-curricular lives of their children. (Stouffer, 1992: 5)

It is thought that many factors come into play that may lead to this decline that stem from the parents themselves, teachers, and the children. Some researchers have found that parents may be uncertain how to be involved or continue to be involved as their children enter middle and high schools (Baker, 1997; Eccles and Harold, 1993; Leitch and Tangri, 1988). Baker (1997) asserts that parents need to be shown the way to be involved in their child's school. Hollyfield (1995) concurs that schools need to initiate ways for parents to be involved in their child's education. Hollifield (1995) notes that research conducted by the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning at Johns Hopkins University substantiates the earlier findings by Smrekar (1992) that schools are a chief component in the development of effective programs for parent involvement in education. Epstein (1986) warns that one of the consequences of declining parent involvement as children advance through the grades is that parents lose the momentum to continue to improve and build upon their skills to work with their children at home effectively.

In elementary schools, many parents are involved in their children's education 'at home' and some 'at school'. Epstein and Dauber (1989) found that PI programs in

elementary schools were more extensive, well founded, and sound in comparison to PI programs in middle schools. Other research findings have supported these same results that parent involvement remains or continues to be more prevalent in elementary or primary schools (Leitch and Tangri, 1988; Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988; Brian, 1994). It has also been noted that teachers request help from parents during the early education of young children in primary or elementary schools more than teachers of older children in middle and secondary schools (Epstein, 1987; Stallworth and Williams, 1982).

Epstein (1987) found that as children get older and progress through the elementary grades, the number of teachers who use parent involvement as a teaching strategy decreases. Stallworth and Williams (1982) surveyed 2,083 parents, teachers and school administrators in six U.S. states over a five-year period about their views on parent involvement in education. Their findings are supported by the later findings of Epstein (1986) that parents believe the major reason parent involvement decreases during high school education is that teachers rarely request parents to be involved. Parents also feel that high school administrators do not promote their involvement in education (Stallworth and Williams, 1982). Epstein's work (1990) supports the earlier findings of Stallworth and Williams (1982). Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) surveyed 307 high school teachers and found that only 15% of teachers had some communication with the majority of the parents of their students. In addition, 60% of teachers in this study reported that they rarely or never communicated with the parents of their students (Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988). Epstein (1995) noted that partnerships between home and school would decrease as children progress through the grades unless schools and teachers actively work to develop and implement strategies for involvement. Connors and Epstein (1994) observed that high school teacher contact with parents was usually due to a problem with the student. They suggest that a lack of positive discourse with parents may lead to the decline in parent involvement (Connors and Epstein, 1994).

There is evidence that supports parent involvement as being beneficial to children as they get older (Epstein, 1987). She cited an example where teachers involved the parents in the education of their 9-10 year old children and it was found that the children did more homework, had better conduct and behaviour, and worked harder overall.

Brian (1994) found that parent involvement programs for students at the high school level are as valuable as parent involvement programs for students at the elementary school level. She notes that parents with adolescents in high school need to be educated about the benefits of parent involvement at this level of schooling. Researchers have found that teachers lack the knowledge and they have not been trained to use strategies that promote parent involvement in schools (Leitch and Tangri, 1988; Williams and Chavkin, 1989; Comer, 1986; Stallworth and Williams, 1982; Epstein, 1995).

On the issue of teacher training, it has been noted that only a small percentage of teachers (less than 5%) surveyed by Williams and Chavkin (1989) had any formal education in the ways or methods to involve parents in their children's education. According to Connors and Epstein (1994), approximately two-thirds of the 150 teachers they surveyed in six high schools in Maryland perceived they lacked training in how to involve parents in their child's education. Williams and Chavkin (1989) observed that educators responsible for training teachers reported that they occasionally discussed parent involvement in education during one class or even less time than that. Schurr (1992) recommends that educating parents and teachers about how to be effective partners is an important part in developing quality parent involvement in school programs.

A large majority (90%) of parents surveyed in Epstein's (1987) studies reported working with their children on school assignments at home. Less than one quarter of these parents reported that they were given specific advice from teachers on how to improve their child/s abilities (Epstein, 1987). She asserts that teachers need to provide more direction to parents about how to effectively work with their children on learning activities at home. In relation to this issue, Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) note:

> The present organisation of school does not encourage a high level of parent-school relations. It is up to educational theorists, researchers, and administrators to consider ways to bring more parents into the active school community. (Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988: 77).

Research studies investigating parent involvement in schools have mainly focused on families with young children in primary school grades or families with pre-school children (Leitch and Tangri, 1988). Critically, Leitch and Tangri (1988) argue that studies have rarely focused on parental involvement with older children or on both the families' and schools' views simultaneously. To avoid these same pitfalls, Leitch and Tangri (1988) investigated barriers to parent involvement in schools by surveying all of the major players involved- children, parents, teachers, and school system. They studied low income, black families and their children in 7th and 8th grades living in the District of Columbia in Washington, D.C. They found that '...It is the lack of knowledge about how each can use the other person more effectively that is a major barrier' (Leitch and Tangri, 1988: 74).

Home and School: Are They Separate Domains for Education and Learning?

Prior to the 1850s, children in the United States were educated at home by their parents (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999). Public schooling in the United States began toward the end of the 19th century and the early part of the 1900s. Advocates of public schooling claimed that educating children in public schools would diminish 'the negative influence of the family' (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999: 2). Scott Stein and Thorkildsen (1999) note that this same reasoning was a significant influencing factor in the decision to place children with disabilities in institutional care.

Hiatt (1994) notes that the separation of home and school has been an issue of contention for US parents since 1897. In the early 1900s, parents mobilised to form parent – teacher organisations in schools so that they could play some role in their children's education (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995). The precursor of parent – teacher organisations was the National Congress of Mothers, established by mothers who were concerned about their inability to be involved in the education of their children (Hiatt, 1994).

According to Baker (1997), many parents in her study did not perceive home and school as separate domains for learning. Parents reported that they felt a responsibility to do

their part at home to encourage and promote their child's education and learning. One parent even referred to 'home' as another 'school' (Baker, 1997). Baker's study (1997) supports earlier findings by Epstein (1986) that the majority of parents want to cooperate and collaborate with schools to help their children succeed.

Epstein (1995: 702) considers two opposing philosophies or what she refers to as 'spheres of influence' concerning relations between school and home and their effects on parent involvement in education. Some believe that the two institutions of home and school should be 'separate spheres of influence' with parents in charge and responsible for the development of children at home and teachers in charge of the education of children at school (Epstein, 1995: 702). In contrast, Epstein (1995: 702) refers to the opposing philosophy as 'overlapping spheres of influence' stating that home and school share responsibility for the child's intellectual, emotional, and social development. From this perspective, Epstein (1995) asserts that parents and teachers should work co-operatively to meet the needs of the children. There may be some potential barriers to developing home and school partnerships based upon 'overlapping spheres of influence'. Some teachers do not practice parent involvement in education because they fear that parents will challenge their professional status if they allow parents to get close to them (Epstein, 1995; Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995). Gareau and Sawatzky (1995: 470) note: 'As long as school personnel relate the role of professional to that of expert, it will be difficult to achieve more than surface-level collaboration'. Epstein (1995) also notes that some parents believe that teachers are solely responsible for the education of their children. It has been found that teachers will primarily base their teaching practice on one philosophy or a combination of the two philosophies (Epstein, 1995).

Gareau and Sawatzky (1995) conducted a qualitative study to explore 'parent –school collaboration' in Canadian schools. They found that parents and teachers viewed 'parent-school collaboration' as beneficial and critical for child development and academic success. A major theme that emerged from their data was that 'children live in two worlds' (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995). Parents and teachers in the study often referred to the 'diffuse boundaries' of the two environments that children live in- school

and home (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995). One teacher in the study stated: '...the child carries his experiences back and forth' (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995: 467). A parent in the study described 'parent-school collaboration' as a relationship:

> ...where both parties have to work as partners because they both have a vested interest in the child: not that they're the educators and I'm the parent, and when he comes home from school, that their job ends and mine begins, it's an on-going relationship that happens, from day to day. (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995: 467).

Home/School Relations

Comer (1986: 443) describes the relationship between home and school in the United States up until the 1940s as one of '...trust and mutual respect between home and school'. He relates his personal experience as a child in elementary school in the United States when he claims that home and school were closer and there was more of a sense of community.

> When I went into the grocery store with my mother and father in the 1940s, it was a rare day that we did not encounter someone from my elementary school- the custodian, the principal, the secretary, or a teacher. There would always be an exchange about my school behaviour or achievement. The knowledge that my parents knew and appeared to like and respect the people at my school had a profound impact on my behaviour. The authority my parents held by virtue of the care and guidance they gave me was transferred directly to the people who ran the school. My parents were physically present at school only on visiting days and other special occasions. But their involvement with the school, though indirect, was meaningful and constant. (Comer, 1986: 442).

Beginning in the 1940s and onward, Comer (1986) believes that the relationship between home and school has deteriorated due to significant changes brought on by the growth of cities and development of technology. He describes some home and school relationships as lacking in trust and respect resulting in conflict for all involved (Comer, 1986). Baker (1997) also explored the relationship between home and school. She found that the second most common obstacle to PI in schools was the nature and quality of the relationship between parents and teachers, and schools generally. Some parents reported negative experiences when involved in schools and feared their continued involvement may be detrimental to their children (Baker, 1997).

Some researchers claim that parents are not involved in schools because the schools do not encourage their involvement (Comer, 1986; Baker, 1997). Comer (1986) observed that contact with parents was often problem oriented with some parents being contacted by the school only when their children were having a problem. Baker's work (1997) support earlier findings by Comer (1986) in that some parents felt unwelcome in school unless they were encouraged and summoned to come to school. Parents felt that schools believe they encourage parent involvement, but that in reality, this does not exist in practice in the majority of schools (Baker, 1997). Furthermore, Baker (1997) found that parents felt teachers and schools wanted parent involvement, but there were conditions or stipulations attached. If the parent involvement was useful to schools and easy to arrange, schools were more likely to encourage this. On this same issue, Gareau and Sawatzky (1995) write:

> One of the important dilemmas highlighted by this research is related to the difficulty of introducing a collaborative culture into what has traditionally been a hierarchical organisation. (Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995: 470).

One researcher refers to parents as 'limited partners' noting:

> Limited partnership assumes that the school is responsible for student learning, and that parents may assist only in ways teachers and administrators consider appropriate. The belief is that parents may help the experts after the experts have made the decisions. (Dixon, 1992: 16)

Comer (1986: 444) argues that '... Unfortunately, even when parents are invited into schools, there is frequently no mechanism for using them effectively to improve the relationship there'. Furthermore, it has been noted that for the most part, parents have been left out of the nation wide debate about PI in schools in the United States (Baker, 1997). On this issue, she writes:

> Policies, programs, and practices have been developed based on others' ideas of what parents want and what they need to be effective partners in their children's education. (Baker, 1997: 32).

Findings suggest that parents who work with their children at home on learning activities view the teachers involved positively and evaluate these teachers higher in

teaching expertise and communication abilities (Epstein (1986, 1987). These parents were more knowledgeable about the education their child was receiving; felt obliged to work with their children at home on school work; received direction on how to help their child from the teachers; and acknowledged the extra effort of the teachers to promote parent involvement (Epstein, 1986, 1987). Ginn (1994) found that parent involvement in education results in better comprehension of the overall school programme. Parents feel more attachment and commitment to the school and teachers are more apt to request that parents help their children with school activities at home (Epstein, 1991).

The Effects of Family Structure on Parent Involvement in Education

Family structure may influence the level of parent involvement in their children's education. Duncan (1992) explored the issue of changing family structures, the effect upon PI in schools, and implications for teachers and schools in the United States. He asserts that school administrators and teachers need to consider these changes carefully as they affect the education of children. Duncan (1992) concludes that the biological family unit with children living together with their two parents is no longer the major family structure in America. He notes:

> Long-standing assumptions about definitions of terms such as 'home', 'family', 'parents' are being challenged by terms like 'household', 'remarried family', and 'custodial parent. (Duncan, 1992: 10)

Some children may have several or more adults raising them (Duncan, 1992). These changes in the family unit may complicate and make unclear what part parents should play in their children's school (Duncan, 1992). Furthermore, Duncan (1992) posits that teachers often do not know or understand the makeup of the child's family or who are the active adults involved in the child's care.

It is not uncommon for non-traditional family units to be viewed as 'problem families' by educators and schools (Duncan, 1992). He notes that these families attempt to reconstruct the nuclear family structure in an attempt to be accepted by schools. Duncan (1992) asserts that school systems need to change and adapt to the changes in

family structure by accommodating non-traditional families in the school communities. Schurr (1992) also discusses barriers to parent involvement in schools as a result of teachers and school administrators not understanding and accepting the changes in family structure. She writes: '…today's families come in many varieties ranging from single parent households to "yours, mine, and ours" configurations' (Schurr, 1992: 3). On this issue, other researchers concur noting:

> Our data indicate that the lowest level of family involvement in school programs and processes is among those parents of average students, minority parents, and in stepfamilies and single-parent families. Given these findings, failure to change parent-school relations will perpetuate inequality. (Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988: 77).

Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) found more parent involvement in nuclear families where both biological parents are/were present. Leitch and Tangri (1988) observed that married parents have higher parent involvement rates than single parents. Low parent involvement rates were observed in approximately the same number of married parents as single parents (Leitch and Tangri, 1988). They also noted that larger families, those with six or more persons that may include the extended family, demonstrate higher levels of involvement in their children's education than smaller family units (Leitch and Tangri, 1988). This research is old and so there is a need to revisit the topic of parent involvement and family structure to examine socio-economic changes, particularly globalisation, and the evolution and dynamics of varying family structures evident in the world today.

Parent Involvement in Education: Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practice

There appears to be a disparity between what people believe about parent involvement in education and what they actually do (Epstein and Becker, 1982; Epstein, 1987). This disparity applies to teachers as well as parents. Epstein and Becker (1982) found that 40 per cent of the teachers they surveyed believe that parental involvement in schools should be encouraged, but these same teachers did not use parent involvement activities in their teaching methods. Epstein (1987) noted that the vast majority of parents she surveyed agree that it is important for parents to be involved at school, however, only a small percentage of parents actually were involved at school.

Another potential barrier to parent involvement in schools is the belief of parents that school systems have not changed since they went to school (Schurr, 1992). Some parents believe that schools today are still managed autocratically as they might have been when they attended school and actually fear going into a school building due to bad memories of their own education (Schurr, 1992).

Students' views about parent involvement in their education have not been thoroughly researched (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999). However, Scott Stein and Thorkildsen (1999) do cite the results of a study conducted by The National Commission on Children in the United States (1991) which found that 'most students at all grade levels want to talk to their parents more about schoolwork' (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999: 16).

Some research findings suggest that the beliefs of teachers and parents about what adolescents think about parent involvement in their education differs from what adolescents themselves believe and want from their parents (Stallworth and Williams, 1982). Researchers question whether a common belief that adolescent students do not want their parents involved in their education is truly founded (Stallworth and Williams, 1982). Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) found that less than 20 percent of the 3,746 parents of high school students in their study felt that it was no longer fitting to participate in their child's education. Baker (1997) notes that parent involvement is a complicated issue influenced not only by teachers and schools, but also by the parent's children. Some children do not want their parents involved in schools and/or have set rules with their parents about what kinds of involvement are acceptable to them (Baker, 1997). She observed that many parents in her study reported that they believed their children preferred that they were not involved in schools.

Parent involvement at the secondary school level has not been well defined in research studies (Brian, 1994). Brian (1994) investigated parent involvement in education at three high schools in the United States representing a mix of students/ families from

different socio-economic backgrounds. She conducted a qualitative study to explore the perspectives of parents, students, and teachers on parent involvement at the high school level. She wanted to examine how parents and teachers of high school students view parent involvement in education and if these views were similar to the beliefs of parents and teachers of elementary school children (Brian, 1994). The high school teachers who participated in Brian's study felt that parents need to be advocates for their children and encourage their children to achieve to their highest potential. Brian (1994) also explored whether the adolescents themselves wanted their parents to be involved. She found that all of the adolescents in her study believed that parents should be involved in their children's education (Brian, 1994). Brian's (1994) findings suggest there is a need to educate parents on the advantages of parent involvement with children in high school grades and that schools need to offer a variety of ways for parents to participate in their child's education.

Some researchers have noted that there is a lack of research exploring what types of parent involvement activities are valuable to adolescents (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999). However, findings from the Connors and Epstein (1994) study have shed some light on this question. Connors and Epstein (1994) examined school and family partnerships by surveying over 1,300 high school students from 420 families and found that 82 per cent of students wanted their parents to be involved in their education. Connors and Epstein (1994) concluded that:

> Students need and want to be part of the partnership. Most students want their families more involved as knowledgeable partners, and they are willing to conduct interactions with their families about their homework and about important decisions. (Connors and Epstein, 1994: 27)

Students who participated in the Connors and Epstein (1994: 16) study, stated that they would like to discuss homework assignments with their parents and work on homework assignments which required them to 'interview or talk' with their parent at home. However, there was some student ambivalence about having parents chaperone social related activities. For example, 55 per cent of students did not want their parents to attend a 'class trip'; the remaining 45 per cent of students reported no problem with

having their parent participate in this type of activity (Connors and Epstein, 1994). Connors and Epstein (1994: 18) interpreted student ambivalence about parent volunteering or chaperoning as 'reflecting teens' uncertainties about whether volunteers will affect their developing autonomy and independence from parents'. In Baker's study (1997), many parents perceived that their involvement would embarrass their children and some parents reported that their children made 'rules' for them about their involvement. One 'rule' involved keeping some distance away from the child during school related activities. Baker (1997) noted two examples of 'rules' children set for their parents in her study. One mother reported that her daughter said: 'mommy, stay in the background' whilst another mother mentioned that her son said: ' if you're going to help, don't do it on my team' (Baker, 1997: 21). Both the findings of Connor and Epstein (1994) and Baker (1997) are significant to the outcomes in my study. Chapters 6 and 7 explore these issues in depth.

Parent Involvement in Children's Health Education and Health Promotion

This section explores an area in which parents have participated in their child's education in partnerships with schools, health education and health promotion. Researchers and educators have recognised the important role parents may play in child health. For example, numerous studies have been conducted which have involved parents in teaching about health-related topics as well as promoting the health of children (Perry et al, 1988, 1989; Winett et al, 1993; Sussman et al, 1986; Henderson, 1995; Epstein, 1991; Epstein et al, 1997). Researchers have struggled with how best to use parents in teaching and promoting the health of children (Perry et al, 1988). They note:

> A major dilemma in children's health promotion is how to involve parents in those efforts. Parents serve important health-related roles for their children- as models of appropriate behaviour, as gatekeepers to both opportunities and barriers, and as major sources of reinforcement in most children's lives. (Perry et al, 1988: 1156).

Winett et al (1993) conducted an experimental study to examine the effectiveness of an educational program teaching parents and their 12- to 14-year old children about Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevention. The program was designed for parents and

their children to learn about HIV prevention through the use of video in their own home environment. They also intended to promote family discussion of this topic by using a parent involvement component. 69 families residing in Virginia participated in the study and were randomly placed in either the experimental or control groups (Winett et al, 1993). Although both groups were exposed to basic information about HIV prevention from the video, families in the experimental group also learned about strategies for communicating about this topic and dealing constructively with problems (Winett et al, 1993). They found that families in both experimental and control groups showed an increase in knowledge about HIV prevention. However, families in the experimental group also demonstrated an increase in their ability to discuss HIV prevention as well as work together as a family to solve problems (Winett et al, 1993).

Another study involving families was conducted with 45 seventh grade children and 52 parents of seventh grade children who were not related to each other (Sussman et al, 1986). The purpose of this study was to explore the children's' and parents' views about working together as a family unit during an educational program that focused on smoking prevention. Sussman et al, (1986) wanted to improve a past program that used video as a teaching strategy. Their method for improving the program was to add a parental involvement component to the learning activities at home. Findings revealed that the parents and children felt positively about having some family involvement in the program to discourage young people from starting to smoke tobacco (Sussman et al, 1986). They found that 70-80 percent of parents indicated that they would hesitate in talking with their children about their children's tobacco use, but parents wanted their children to communicate emphatically with them about their (parent's) tobacco use. Based on the outcomes of their study, Sussman et al (1986) argue that families as a whole could benefit from learning communication skills, particularly assertiveness techniques.

A study focusing on healthy nutrition was conducted with 2,250 third grade children in 31 inner city schools in Minnesota and North Dakota (Perry et al, 1988). Specifically, they looked to compare the effectiveness of a nutritional education program that was

based 'at home' with a program based 'at school'. The purpose of the program was to teach young children healthy nutrition and promote eating habits of decreasing intake of foods high in fat and sodium content in order to prevent heart disease (Perry et al, 1988). The 'at school' program was based on a curriculum called 'Hearty Heart and Friends' and the 'at home' program, referred to as the 'Home Team' had similar content, but also included a parent involvement component. In addition to the parent involvement component, the 'Home Team' program consisted of university personnel who functioned as 'coaches' and made visits to the families in their homes. Perry et al (1988) found that children in the 'at school' program demonstrated higher levels of knowledge than the children in the 'at home' program, but the children in the 'at school' program did not change their eating habits. Findings suggest that the children in the 'at home' program made more positive changes in their eating habits by reducing foods high in sodium and fat and by increasing complex carbohydrate foods. 'The data converge to suggest the feasibility and importance of parental involvement for health behaviour changes with children of this age' (Perry et al, 1988: 1156).

During the 1950s, a US government federally funded programme called 'HeadStart' was piloted in the US. Henderson (1995: 13) notes that 'HeadStart' schools were designed to work closely 'with families to foster children's' social and emotional development as well as learning skills, helping children become well prepared for school'. 'HeadStart' schools targeted 3 to 5 year old underprivileged children and their families and required parental involvement 'at school'. Henderson (1995) notes that positive outcomes in child development from 'HeadStart' programmes may be traced into adulthood 'HeadStart' schools have significantly increased and are widespread throughout the US.

Epstein et al (1994) worked with inner city middle schools in Baltimore, Maryland. With the assistance of the teachers, Epstein et al (1994) have designed a programme for parents to work with their children on homework in specific subject areas. This 'interactive homework' programme, called 'TIPS' (Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork), has been designed for use in science, math, health, and language arts

notes (Hollifield, 1995). Epstein et al (1994) note that the goals of the 'TIPS' programme are to promote teaching strategies for parent involvement in education and to build parents' skills and confidence levels in working with their children as their children progress to the middle school grades. Hollifield (1995) writes that 'TIPS':

> …puts students in charge of their homework asking them to complete assignments and to guide interactive discussions, interviews, and other communications with family members. (Hollifield, 1995: 16)

Conclusion

Home – school relations are complex. There may be many potential forces which can come into play to prevent the development and implementation of effective home – school partnerships. A major misconception is the belief of some parents and teachers that children in the middle and high school grades do not want their parents to be involved in their education. There is strong evidence that this is not the case, that children even in secondary school grades want to participate in home – school partnerships, particularly in programmes which encourage home interaction with parents.

There appears to be a lack of knowledge and direction in how to initiate home – school partnerships with few teachers being trained in methods to develop and employ programmes and parents wanting more direction and guidelines on how to be involved in their children's education. Although many teachers and parents acknowledge the importance of family involvement in education, there is a lack of debate between families and schools about how to go forward.

Much of the work on home – school links is often being viewed as supportive of academic growth, but there is a silence in relation to emotional progress and social development. Critically, there is also a silence in relation to what this liaison can do in supporting the family – a point which my research will address.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the sample, setting, timetable and phases of my qualitative research study conducted at an international school in Southern England. Initially, a Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme developed as an intervention for the study was planned to extend the PSE work in the school through parental involvement (see Appendix 1 – PSE Home Assignments). However, early on in the interview process, data emerged from interviews which pointed to the unexpected ways parental involvement in education played a significant and under – reported role in relation to the complexities and dilemmas involved in international mobility (as outlined in Chapter 1). Thus, the focus of the thesis shifted – PSE then became a context for collecting research which highlighted the international mobility (IM) dimension and this now became the centre of the research. The PSE issue then became a background to the more critical concerns of the thesis. The origins of the study and the development of the PSE Programme are provided (see Appendix 2 – Research Trajectory).

So, in this chapter, I want to outline the nature of connections between the PSE work and the collection of data on parental involvement in the IM setting. Other sections of the chapter explore the nature of qualitative research and my rationale for employing qualitative methodology and interviewing as a tool. What I consider to be critical aspects of the research process are examined which include: ethical issues and special considerations when researching families and researching children. Analysis and the interpretation of data, the complexities and challenges of data selection or omission, and the writing up qualitative findings are discussed. The rigour and the limitations of the study are examined.

Sample

There were two phases to the study. 9 parents participated in Phase 1 and 45 internationally mobile (IM) families participated in Phase 2 of the study. The phases of the study and the number of interviews conducted in each phase are illustrated and discussed in a later section of the chapter. Demographic data for parents who participated in Phase 1 consist of birth country/country or origin, race, nationality, family structure and number of children per family (see Tables 2-4).

Table 2.

Parent Characteristics (Phase 1 Of Study)

N=9

Number of Parents	Birth Country/ Country of Origin	*Race/Nationality
4	US	*American
1	Canada	*Canadian
1	Sweden	*Swedish
1	Denmark	*Danish
1	The Netherlands	*Dutch
1	South Africa	*South African

* All parents were Caucasian.

Table 3.

Parent/Family Characteristics (Phase 1 Of Study)

N=9

Number of Parents	Family Structure
8	Nuclear
1	Single-parent, Widowed

Key:

Nuclear (Mother, father and children)

Single-parent (Parent with children)

Table 4.

Parent/Family Characteristics (Phase 1 Of Study)

N=9

Number of Parents	Number of Children Per Family
7	2 children
1	3 children
1	4 children

During Phase 2, the possible total sample was 82 families who were involved in the PSE home-school project. Of these, 45 internationally mobile (IM) families chose to participate in Phase 2 of my study. 37 families did not participate in the study. Of this number, 6 students decided not to participate in the study because they were not presently living with their parents who were residing in Japan or the Middle East. The remaining 31 students and their families did not participate for unknown reasons.

The parents/families who participated in the study were advantaged, coming from middle to upper middle socio-economic backgrounds. However, there were many students from the United States and Canada from middle socio-economic backgrounds who were able to attend private school only whilst living abroad as part of their parent's employment benefits package for expatriate families. Students from these families would usually attend public schools (the equivalent of state schools in the UK) when residing in the US or Canada. The majority of the fathers were employed as executives for large, international corporations.

The approximate age of the parents in the study ranged from 35 to 55 years old with the majority of parents being in their early to mid-forties. Their children, the students at the school were 13 to 14 years old. 26 female students and 19 male students participated in the study with their parents. Demographic data for the 45 IM families who participated in Phase 2 include: race, family structure, and number of children per family (see Tables 5-7).

Table 5.

Parent/Family Characteristics (Phase 2 Of Study)

N=45

Number of Families	Race of Families
39	Caucasian
3	Asian (Korean, Japanese)
2	Hispanic
1	Indian

Table 6.

Family Characteristics (Phase 2 Of Study)

N=45

Number of Families	Family Structure
40	Nuclear
1	Separated
1	Single-parent
2	Blended
1	Other

Key:

Blended (Parents and children from a 1st marriage and/or children born to 2nd marriage)
Nuclear (Mother, father, and children)
Single-parent (Parent with children)
Other (Child residing with aunt and uncle)

Table 7.

Family Characteristics (Phase 2 Of Study)

N=45

Number of Families	Number of Children Per Family
21	2 children
15	3 children
5	4 children
2	5 children
1	2 children and *1 niece
1	1 adopted child

* The niece was the student who participated in the study with her aunt in England.

Parents from 29 of the 45 families who participated in Phase 2 of the study, reported their birth country/country of origin as North America (United States or Canada). The remaining parents from 16 families identified their birth country/country of origin to include any of the following: Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Libya, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (England, Scotland). Parents had a national upbringing in the various countries listed above and were not internationally mobile as children. Parents from several families were of mixed backgrounds: French mother and British father, British mother and Libyan father, and parents of British and North American (Canada or the United States) origin.

The students in my study were from many countries around the world. For some students, it was complicated and perhaps impossible to identify their 'home' country, culture and nationality which is not unusual for 'global nomads' or 'Third Culture Kids' ('TCKs'). Unlike their parents, many of these students have not had a national upbringing from their country of origin or birth country. For example, students may have been born in one country and shortly after birth moved to another country for two or three years, then continued to move from place to place. Some students held passports from several countries. For other students in the study, it was a different scenario and the scenario varied from family to family. Some students from North America were born in the United States or Canada. They may have spent some time in their country of origin or birth country, then their families relocated to England for usually a two to three year period and then returned to the United States or Canada at some point in time.

Demographic data for parent/family characteristics (birth country/country of origin, nationality and other pertinent details is provided for respondents whose views are contained in each chapter of findings (see Tables 9-12 in Chapters 4 through 7).

Setting

My study was conducted at a private, international school in Southern England. I am deliberately omitting some specific description and details about the school in an effort to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants in my study.

The school was originally established to serve the educational needs of children and families from North America. However, the school later broadened its mission and educational programmes to meet the growing needs of IM students who were seeking education which was flexible and portable, enabling them to be eligible for entrance into universities around the world. The school's growth paralleled the growth in the numbers of IM families increasing around the world as a result of globalisation and the growth of capitalistic economic markets. Similar to other international schools, the school where the study took place was '...created in response to a demand which arose from the continuous and vast movement of people, often living outside their familiar milieus, often in foreign countries!' (Akram, 1995: 40)

Although the school where the study took place is designated as an international school, there is what (Pascoe, 1994: p. 144) describes as a 'strong American bias' at the school. Chapter 6 of this thesis explores how the cultural identities of international schools affect IM families of similar or different nationalities and cultures.

Qualitative Research: Rationale for Choice

Qualitative research is complex and Lincoln and Guba (1985: 8) note that 'it is precisely because the matter is so involved that it is not possible to provide a simple definition'. Qualitative research involves using 'a set of interpretative practices' which 'privileges no single methodology over another. It has no theory, or paradigm that is distinctly its own' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 3). Strauss and Corbin (1990: 17) describe qualitative research as 'any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification'. It is important to note, however, that some quantitative procedures may be used in analysing the data in qualitative studies. For example, I used frequency counts for some themes in my

findings showing how many IM families described their families as being close and open. When possible, frequency counts represent precise numbers, and at other times, frequency counts may be approximated when there is an element of interpretation. However, the data from qualitative studies are analysed primarily using qualitative procedures.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2) note that qualitative research is 'multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter'. Qualitative research is also known as 'naturalist inquiry' which means this paradigm is 'always carried out, logically enough, in a natural setting, since context is so heavily implicated in meaning' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 187). They explain further:

> We suggest that inquiry must be carried out in a 'natural' setting because phenomena of study, whatever they may be- physical, chemical, biological, social, psychological- *take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves*...No phenomenon can be understood out of relationship to the time and context that spawned, harboured, and supported it. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 189)

The setting where the data was collected was mainly in my private office and also in the family homes, the classroom during the PSE programme and other locations that suited the interviewee. Miles and Huberman (1994: 7) note that qualitative research seeks '...to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day to day situation'.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) discuss the reasons why qualitative research methods are used. If the study is looking at experiences of some type, then qualitative research design is more suitable. They note that investigations about a person's experience with illness, is one example of when qualitative inquiry is the best choice to investigate this phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). I decided that a qualitative research design better suited my area of inquiry for this study. As with the example above, I was interested in learning about experiences, but specific to this study, the experiences of internationally mobile families, the experiences of families who are involved in their child's education as well as home/school relations. It would be difficult to describe in

depth the experiences of parents and the children in the study using quantitative methods because of limitations of research instruments generally used. For example, if a written survey were used to collect data about the phenomena of interest, there would not be the opportunity to have discussion with participants.

Perhaps the most basic way to get insight into the experiences people have and the meanings these experiences have for them is to talk to them about these phenomenon (Blumer, 1969). Seidman (1998) discusses the use of interviewing as a tool in qualitative methodology as a way of understanding social experiences:

> At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth. That is why people whom we interview are hard to code with numbers, and why finding pseudonyms for participants is a complex and sensitive task (Seidman, 1998: 3).

Interviewing was appropriate in my study because I wanted to learn about 'processes', the 'meaning of experiences' and 'their effects'. My choice of interviewing was critical for two other reasons. First, clarification of questions and responses of the interviewer and interviewees was a priority in terms of the trustworthiness of the study. Second, follow up during the interviews was important because I wanted to be able to ask questions spontaneously depending on the interviewee's response during the interview or be asked questions by the interviewees.

Conceptual Framework Guiding the Study

The key conceptual framework in which the study is located lies in the tradition of symbolic interactionism. Herbert Blumer (1969) states:

> Symbolic interactionism rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. Such things include everything that the human being may note in his world – physical objects, such as trees or chairs; other human beings, such as a mother or a store clerk; categories of human beings, such as friends or enemies; institutions as a school or a government; guiding ideals, such as individual independence of honesty; activities of others, such as their commands or requests; and such situations as an individual encounters in his daily life. The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are

> handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (Blumer, 1969: 2)

These meanings must not be taken for granted (Blumer, 1969). They must be examined in their own right. Some researchers make the mistake of focusing more on causation or other factors and they ignore these meanings. Boss (2002: 37) who also uses 'symbolic interactionism' to study families notes:

> Symbolic interaction focuses on the interaction within a family as indicated by the symbols of interaction (e.g. language, rituals, rules, and roles). A family constructs a symbolic reality on the basis of their shared meanings (or lack of) about the stressful situation they are experiencing. (Boss, 2002: 37)

Gelles (1995: 46) notes that 'symbolic interactionists are concerned with everyday behaviour and interpersonal relationships' and importantly, as Spradley (1979: iv) notes: 'In our complex society, the need for understanding how people see their experience has never been greater'.

Methods Used in the Study

The research strategy used in the study was qualitative in style. Fetterman (1998) describes ethnographic and qualitative research as both an art and a science with the goal being to describe a group or culture. Patton (1990: 67) notes that the 'critical assumption guiding ethnographic inquiry is that every human group that is together for a period of time will evolve a culture'. The qualitative researcher focuses on the everyday lives of people, looking closely at how people think and behave in their world. Spradley (1979) describes a culture as a group of people who share meanings that are shaped by their social interaction. He also notes that 'learning from people…rather than studying people' is the goal of qualitative researchers (Spradley, 1979: 3). 'Informants are a source of information; literally, they become teachers' for the qualitative researcher. (Spradley, 1979: 25).

During the initial set of interviews with nine parents, I began to do some preliminary open coding and analysed for themes and possible categories. These initial categories or 'codes' were considered provisional categories. 'Codes' are 'tags or labels for

assigning units of meaning' to data (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 56). A significant and major theme emerged from the interviews based upon the systematic coding of data. This theme involved the lives of families in transition, those families who relocate and live abroad. I found that international mobility was significantly impacting the lives of the families in the study. Initially in the study, I began to focus on parental involvement in their children's education. Identification of this theme affected the entire direction of the study as the area of inquiry broadened.

A critical aspect of qualitative work is that the researcher is a human 'instrument' from the very beginning when ideas are first being conceived (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 5) note that 'qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor's perspective through detailed interviewing and observation'. Qualitative researchers try to get as close as possible to the actors they are studying, which is one reason why the researcher is the human 'instrument' of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 38).

Qualitative researchers need to have certain skills and qualities. Ball (1990) discusses the need for the researcher to be reflexive. He defines reflexivity as 'the conscious and deliberate linking of the social process of engagement in the field with the technical processes of data collection and the decisions that this linking involves' (Ball, 1990: 159). Hertz (1997: 49) makes the point strongly; she believes that the researcher 'as a positioned subject, constructs interpretations of experiences rather than simply reporting on the "facts" discovered during fieldwork'. Furthermore, she writes:

> ...reflexivity, then, is ubiquitous. It permeates every aspect of the research process, challenging us to be more fully conscious of the ideology, culture, and politics of those we study and those we select as our audience. (Hertz, 1997: viii)

I found the role of researcher, being a human 'instrument' complex and challenging (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). During the research process, I was reflexive by being fully engaged in the research process, directing the study, making decisions as well as collecting and analysing data. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 59) note that data collection

and data analysis are 'tightly woven processes, and must occur alternatively because the analysis directs the sampling of data'. Miles and Huberman (1994: 9) note the importance of '…isolating patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection'. For example, once the themes related to international mobility and its impact on families emerged from the first phase of data collection, I redesigned my interview schedule to take account of these findings and to explore these emergent themes more directly.

In addition to reflexivity, qualitative researchers need to have what Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to as 'theoretical sensitivity'. Theoretical sensitivity involves 'having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capacity to separate the pertinent from that which isn't' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 42). All researchers enter the field with some degree of theoretical sensitivity based on previous experience and reading about the topic. During the course of the study, I actively worked at increasing my theoretical sensitivity by reading widely about relocation and the international mobility of families, home/school relations, PSE and methodology. The pre fieldwork interviews done with parents before the main data collection (Phase 1) and interviews with practitioners in the field were other ways in which I actively developed theoretical sensitivity.

Theoretical sensitivity can be developed during the whole research process. Qualitative researchers need to use theoretical sensitivity throughout the research process, not just during the analysis and interpretation stage. During the study, I was constantly thinking about the findings and writing in my research journal throughout the PSE programme and during the interview process. During the interviews, some of the parents were telling me what they learned about their children while working on the PSE programme/study together. The information came out when they were describing the process of working with their children. At that point, I decided that if parents did not tell me what, if anything, they learned about their children, then I would ask them. I listened to what interviewees were telling attentively and when I discovered a theme, followed up with this when interviewing other participants. Strauss and Corbin (1990:

42) state that 'it is this theoretical sensitivity that allows one to develop a theory that is grounded, conceptually dense, and well integrated'.

Phases of Study

As noted earlier in this chapter, there were two phases to the study. The first phase began in autumn 1996. There were several aims for the first phase of the study. First, I wanted to learn as much as possible about parent involvement in children's education from the parents themselves. I was especially interested to learn about reasons for involvement, types of involvement, obstacles to involvement, and generally what parents thought about being involved in their children's education. A second aim was for me, the researcher, to become more confident and skilled at interviewing participants in the study. Last, the first phase of the study served as pre fieldwork and as a pilot study that allowed me to make any necessary changes prior to the start of the second phase of the study. To prepare for data collection, I developed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 3 – Guideline Questions for Interviews (Parents/Teachers – Phase 1) to explore the topic of parent involvement in their children's education with 9 parents who would be interviewed during the first phase of the study.

The second phase of the study began with the launch of the PSE programme (a twenty-week course) from August 1996 through January 1997. 45 families participated in the PSE programme meaning that parents and their children in grade 8 worked on a series of eight home assignments on various PSE topics (see Appendix 1 – PSE Home Assignments). The 37 students who did not participate in the study worked on the home assignments themselves. Two semi-structured interview guides were developed and used; one interview guide for parents (see Appendix 4 – Guideline Questions – Parent Interviews) and a different guide for students (see Appendix 5 – Guideline Questions – Student Interviews).

The interview schedule for both phases of the study is provided (see Table 8).

Table 8.

Interview Schedule (September 1996-May 1997)					
	Mothers	**Fathers**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
Phase 1	7 *	2 *	0	0	9
Phase 2	38	7	17	19	81
Total	45	9	17	19	90

* 1 father and 2 mothers were teachers at the school where study took place (Phase 1).

Interviewing and Other Fieldwork

The primary strategy for collecting the data was the interview. 90 audio taped interviews were conducted with parents and their children. My rationale for choosing interviewing as a strategy is best explained as follows. In the study, I wanted to learn about the impact of international mobility on families, family involvement in education, and the experiences of parents and their teenage children who worked on the PSE programme together. I was looking for parents and their children to reconstruct the interaction and events that took place. Rubin and Rubin (1995) describe qualitative interviewing as an adventure opening windows into people's lives.

My decision for using interviewing as the primary strategy was based on the fact that I would not be present at the homes of the 45 families when their discussions would take place. Rubin and Rubin (1995) emphasise that through interviewing, the researcher can attempt to understand the experiences of people and reconstruct the process and events that occurred without the presence of the researcher. In addition to using interviews as a research strategy, there was a small element of participant observation as students were observed in class during the term. I kept 'field notes' about any significant events that took place in the classroom as well as informal conversations with students in my research journal. Yin (1989) notes the importance of 'field notes' to qualitative research and Patton (1990) concurs:

> Field notes contain the ongoing data that are being collected. They consist of descriptions of what is being experienced and observed, quotations from the people observed, the observer's feelings and reactions to what is observed, and field-generated insights and interpretations. (Patton, 1990: 242)

One entry I made in my 'field notes' involved one of the PSE home assignments that dealt with values. Parents and students were given a list of important life values and they were requested to prioritise the list of values in order of importance to their lives (see Appendix 1, Home Assignment #3 – List of Values). After completion of this assignment, the students came to class the following week very excited about what had happened at home. All of the students wanted to talk about how they and their parents prioritised these values. Many students quoted their parents and explained the content of discussions with their parents to the other students in class.

In addition, I was also careful to note discussions that I had with parents and students in the hallways at school when our paths met. Ball (1990) notes that research participants or 'social actors' will behave differently depending on the setting. He points out that there are a variety of possible settings in schools. Many researchers make the mistake of not investigating beyond the classroom. During the study, students talked with me before and after class and sometimes by their lockers in the hallways when they had just arrived at school in the morning. I made notes of these informal conversations in my research journal.

Documents from the PSE programme were used to support data from interviews where appropriate. For example, in one of the PSE assignments, students were requested to write anything they wanted about one of more of these items (see Appendix 1 – Home assignment #5 - 'Country, Culture & Family'). Several of the written narratives were used (as noted in Chapter 5) in support of themes which emerged from systematic coding of the data.

The Interview Itself

The majority of the interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in a private office at the school where I was employed. Several interviews took place off the school campus. Parents of one family were interviewed in their home at their request and two fathers were interviewed at their place of business upon my offer and willingness to travel to them. In an effort to increase the number of interviews with fathers in the

study, I offered to travel to them to a London office or villages and towns nearby the school to decrease the time involvement for them. Spradley (1979) notes:

> In estimating the amount of time someone might give to interviews, it is well to keep in mind that a busy informant keenly interested in the project will often make time! (Spradley, 1979: 51-52)

Although the fathers in the study had time pressures due to work related international travel and other responsibilities, they were interested in the PSE programme and study and very willing to be interviewed.

Five interviews were conducted with both parents together. The interviews were scheduled jointly at the request of those families who found this arrangement more convenient for them. It was not my preference to interview couples jointly as I felt one interviewee might have dominated the discussion, but I was not about to miss the opportunity to interview the five couples, especially the fathers. Interviewing couples together presented a challenge because, in most cases, the women spoke more than the men. I had to work hard to balance the interview and draw the fathers into the discussion.

The interviews varied in the length of time for the appointment. Most of the interviews with the students lasted on average 20 minutes with some interviews lasting forty minutes. Class periods at the school were 40 minutes in length, so I scheduled 1 - 2 students for interviews per class period. Scheduling was flexible, so some student interviews lasted 40 minutes taking the whole class period and there were other times when two students would be interviewed during one class period. On average, interviews with parents lasted 50 - 60 minutes with several interviews lasting 90 minutes. Two parents were interviewed twice, once during the pre fieldwork time and once during the main data collection. The remaining 7 parents interviewed during the first phase of the study did not have children in 8th grade, so did not participate in the second phase of the study.

Interviews were recorded on audiocassette tapes with the exception of two interviews. The two interviews that were not recorded were with two male students from Korea. These students spoke English as a second language and were concerned about speaking on tape. I felt that taping their interviews would make them uncomfortable, so instead, we talked and I made notes about our conversation. Prior to recording any interview, I asked permission from participants. When telephoning parents to arrange an interview appointment time, I asked them for permission to tape record the interviews. In addition, I used a checklist (see Appendix 6 - Interview Checklist) to provide important information about the study as well as to be certain to cover the same information with each parent on the telephone. Demographic data was collected from all parents who were interviewed at the start of the interview and the information was recorded on a demographic data form (see Appendix 7 – Interview Demographic Form) I created.

The interviews were semi-structured. Some specific questions were asked and in some parts of the interview, interviewees did most of the talking (see Appendices 4 and 5 - Guideline Questions Parent Interviews, Guideline Questions Student Interviews). For example, the less structured parts of the interview were when parents would describe the process of working together with their son or daughter on the home discussions during the PSE programme/study. I was able to gain much insight into how parents and their children communicated with each other as I listened to parents describe this process in their own words. The more structured parts of the interview took place when I asked specific questions to obtain detail, examples and context. Parents and their children were asked the following questions. How did you decide to participate in the study? Describe the process of working together during the PSE programme. Did you find any advantages in working together on a project like this? Were there any disadvantages?

It is important to point out that globalisation and the impact of international mobility and transience on IM families was data which emerged from my research. I had not planned to investigate these topics when the study began which is the reason that guideline questions for interviews did not address these topics. However, parents

continually brought up their international mobility, the costs and challenges of which are explored in depth in Chapters 4 and 5 of the thesis. My discussions with parents about these topics were open - ended. When parents brought up the topic of international mobility and its effects on their families, I encouraged them to tell me about this. At times, some parents thought they were getting off the topic of parent involvement and I quickly let them know that what they were describing to me was relevant and that I was very interested in what they had to say.

Rubin and Rubin (1995: 11) describe a qualitative interview as being 'a window on a time and a social world that is experienced one person at a time, and one incident at a time'. Parents provided background information that described the setting of where their discussions took place as well as some description of content. For example, *'my daughter came in the bedroom and sat on my bed and we talked about the topic'* or *'my son and I (father) sat together in the living room and discussed the topic and then my son called his mother into the room to hear her perspective'*. This allowed me the opportunity to try to piece together the 'family experience'. Some parents involved other members of the family in the discussion of the PSE topics and completion of the written assignments. One parent telephoned her older children who were away at university and got their input about the PSE topics. Many parents involved younger and older children in the PSE discussions.

The Researcher and Researched

This section examines the relationship between researcher and the IM families being researched. It is important to be aware of factors that affect the relationship between researcher and researched. Edwards (1993) writes:

> Among other factors, racial, class, and sex differences and similarities enter into the consciousness of individuals and groups and determine their concepts of themselves and others as well as their status in the community. This has implications for the process of research. (Edwards, 1993: 187)

Burgess (1986: 5-6) notes: 'Social characteristics assist both the researcher and the subject to "place" each other within the social structure' and therefore 'can have some

bearing on the relationship between them'. During the study, I was aware of a number of ways the parents and students may 'place' me and I 'place' them. I possessed similar characteristics to some of the participating parents and students with regard to nationality (American), race (Caucasian), gender (female), socio-economic background (middle class). I was also IM. It is possible that American families may have identified with me and I them, more than non-American families based on nationality and/or culture. For example, it is possible that non-American parents may have viewed me as an American employee in an American school. As noted in an earlier section, even though the school was designated as an 'international' school, there was a strong American bias. Related to this discussion, Chapter 6 explores the discomfort of non-American IM parents in being involved in their children's education 'at school'.

I also had a working relationship with family members of different gender and was aware that the researcher and researched relationship may be influenced by this difference. When interviewing fathers and male students, I was careful not to assume anything and probed carefully to ensure my understanding of their unique perspective.

Furthermore, although I would have liked to be considered an independent person, I was well aware that parents and students might view me as an 'agent' of the school. For example, there were times during the interviews with parents that they had a problem or concern about the school that they wanted to voice. At these times, the parents asked about the confidentiality of the content of the interviews. As I had done at the beginning of the study, I reassured parents that the school would not be given information about the content of the interviews or about them as participants. At that point, parents felt comfortable talking about their concerns. All of the parents and students were aware that I was the PSE or health teacher, which perhaps would 'place' me as an advocate of students and their families as well as someone who was concerned about the welfare of families. It is possible the parents would have considered that we (researcher and researched) had something in common which would be the welfare of their adolescent children and my students. The students may have 'placed' me as an 'authority' figure at the school as well as an adult with power over them. Other

students may have 'placed' me as someone at the school who could help because students visited me privately for assistance with personal problems. As PSE teacher and researcher, I felt that the participants and I had a contract with each other. We had agreed to work together during the PSE programme and study in a home/school partnership. I was well aware of the importance of 'placing' in the researcher and researched roles. Lofland and Lofland (1995: 23) write: '…"who" the researcher is, in contrast to "who" the researched are, may throw up barriers to the acquisition of rich data'. I was not aware of any barriers that affected the quality of the study.

Researching Families

This section explores the complexities of studying families and the special considerations of working with adolescents. Researching families may be a very challenging experience for researchers for many reasons. The subjectivity and values of the researcher may come into play. Gelles (1995: 29) notes that the 'centrality and importance of the family and the intimacy of the family environment often blind us <researchers> to the reality of family life and the family as a social institution'. He identifies five obstacles that may cloud or conceal the ability of the researcher to impartially study families. These obstacles are:

> …our personal involvement in families, the private nature of families, the sanctity of families and family relations, the variation in family forms over time and across society, and the changes that have occurred in families. (Gelles, 1995: 29)

Ball (1990) emphasises the importance of establishing rapport with participants early on in the research process. The goal is to establish rapport with the participants based on trust and openness. This rapport building needs to be continuous and the end result is that the researcher is able to collect the data. In terms of family privacy and sanctity, I tried to be sensitive and was careful not to probe at particular times during the interviews. I used open-ended questions as much as possible to allow the interviewees to tell me what they felt comfortable to say and wanted me to know. I felt that I had established trusting relationships with the participating families and that they would tell me what they wanted me to know and some families did so. Some parents described

very personal discussions they had with their teenage children, which, indicated to me that they were comfortable talking with me. My views of families and the changes families have experienced over time is that many different family structures have evolved to meet the needs of family members in a time of great social change.

Working with the students during the study was challenging and interesting. My view about the adolescent students in the study was that they were individuals in their own right. Waksler (1991) cautions adult researchers noting that the number one bias is that 'children are unfinished, in process, not anywhere yet'. She explains further:

> In everyday life we adults take for granted that children *as a category* know *less* than adults, have less experience, are *less* serious, and are *less* important than adults in the ongoing work of everyday life. I suggest that for the word *less* we as sociologists try substituting the word *different* and consider the theoretical and methodological implications. What is children's knowledge and in what ways is it like and unlike adults' knowledge. To say that children have different experiences from adults focuses on a researchable topic, whereas the designations *more/less* clearly ground study in judgement. (Waksler, 1991: 63)

Seidman (1998: 89) notes that interviewing children 'takes a special kind of sensitivity on the part of the interviewer' and that the interviewer 'must know how to connect to children…without patronising them'. My professional experience as a teacher of adolescent students was considerable and I believe this aided me in the interview process.

It was challenging to interview some of the students. Unlike their parents, some students did not appear to be able to process and explain their experiences and frequently I needed to ask questions in a different manner. Other students were very articulate and in some cases, more articulate than some of the parents I interviewed. I was rather amazed as these students talked away. After interviewing a few students, I wished that I had more training and experience in interviewing this age group, particularly in the area of questioning techniques. Walker (1994: 2) notes that: 'Children of all ages can tell us what they know if we ask them the right question in the

right way'. Aldridge and Wood (1998: 114) concur with Walker (1994) noting that: '...it is the responsibility of the interviewer to ask age-appropriate questions'.

During the interviews, I avoided complex questions and used open-ended questions as much as possible. Aldridge and Wood (1998) note that direct questioning should be avoided when interviewing children. She suggested the use of open-ended questions which are less likely to 'lead the child or put him/her under pressure' (Aldridge and Wood, 1998: 114-115). Some students seemed pressured by the tape recorder, so I frequently asked the question, shut the tape recorder off to give students time to think about the question, and then turned the recorder on for the student to respond to the question. Many of the students seemed more relaxed with this process.

During the interviews, parents and their teenage children individually described a similar process of working together and/or specific discussions that took place between them. Although they were unaware of this verification of content and context of the data provided, I was aware of this early on in the data collection. This led to my decision to try to interview as many members of the same family as possible (although interviewing more than one member of each family had been my plan to begin with). This was valuable because I was not present for these family discussions and interactions in the home. I had to rely on what participants told me during the interviews. Interviewing members of the same family allowed me to apply some triangulation to the data.

Entry to the Field

The study was conducted at the school where I was employed. This meant that my position was one of an insider. Lofland and Lofland (1995: 73) note a benefit of being a 'known investigator' stating that the researcher may 'enjoy the tremendous advantage of being able to move about, observe, or question in a relatively unrestricted way'. Although there are benefits to being an insider, I was careful not to assume that my study would be approved and/or that I could omit any stages in the approval process. So, therefore, I proceeded as if I was an outsider to the school. First, I wrote a

memorandum (see Appendix 8 – Letter to Headteacher) to the current Headteacher requesting permission to conduct the study at the school. Seidman (1998) gives the following advice:

> Researchers studying the experience of people at a particular site, whether it be factory, school, church, human service organisation, or business must gain access through the person who has responsibility for the operation of the site. (Seidman, 1998: 37-38)

In the memorandum to the Headteacher, I included information about the nature of the study, the aims of the study, and what participation in the study would entail. The Headteacher approved my request to conduct the study at the school and he did not have any questions or concerns to discuss with me. I actually sought permission from the Headteacher on two occasions. The first request for approval was during the 1st phase of the study and prior to my interviewing nine parents for the purpose of gathering data about involvement of parents in their child's education. The second request for permission mainly dealt with the main data collection that would involve 45 IM families connected with this international school.

The next stage was to make appointments with the principal and assistant principal of the middle school to obtain their permission to involve students in the study. Approval was granted. The principal also gave me permission to interview students during school time. It was suggested that I contact the appropriate teachers to find a convenient time to do this. Prior to interviewing students, I obtained permission from parents to interview their children and I also asked the students for their permission to be interviewed. The legal age of consent to participate in research studies differs from country to country. The student participants were 13 to 14 years old and were still below the legal age for consent (age 18 in the United States and age 16 in the United Kingdom) to give consent to be involved in the study. Seidman (1998) outlined some important considerations when interviewing children. He referred to these as 'special conditions' for children. He writes:

> If participants have not attained the legal age of consent to treatments or procedures involved in research…interviewers must obtain the informed consent of a parent or legal guardian. If appropriate, researchers should seek

> the "assent" of the child, but must seek the "permission" of a parent or guardian. (Seidman, 1998: 60)

In addition, I asked if the students were comfortable missing the class time selected by their teachers. The teachers chose class time for student interviews that did not involve the teaching of new content and assured me that students would not be at a disadvantage by missing some time from the class to be interviewed. My rationale in discussing the interview time with students was to assess whether students had difficulty in the particular subject area they would miss to be interviewed. Ethically, I did not want participation in the study to result in any negative consequence for students. When the PSE programme ended and I was about to begin interviewing, I began to talk with potential student interviewees. I did not interview any student participants until grades for the course were completed and sent home. I did not want students to feel they had to agree to be interviewed. I gave all students the choice of not being interviewed. Several students preferred not to be interviewed and I respected their decision.

I made certain that those persons at school who needed to be informed about the study and what I was about to do were notified and provided with the opportunity to ask questions and/to express any concerns. So, although the approval process took some time and planning, this time was well spent. Once approval was granted, my anxiety level decreased. My anxiety stemmed from political issues that had come up in the past. Several years previously, some parents in the school community formed a group and began to pressure school administrators to allow more parental decision making in curriculum issues. The school administration disapproved and rejected the parental request. The Headteacher also banned the parents from the campus and notified them to find another school for their children. My concern was that perhaps the school administration would not support parents working with their children during the PSE programme/study as this would involve parents directly in the curriculum. I was relieved that this potential obstacle did not occur and there were no repercussions.

Participant Access and Informed Consent

In September 1996, all grade 8 students and their parents were invited to participate in the study and PSE programme together. The invitation was in the form of a letter (see Appendix 9 – Letter to Parents and Students) which I distributed to each of the 82 students enrolled in the PSE programme during the second week of class. The letter explained the PSE programme topics and provided information about the study including what participation in the study could mean. I read the letter aloud to students in class and then answered any questions they had. I emphasised that participation in the study was voluntary and that in no way, whether students participated or not, would grades be affected. In the letter, I explained that the home assignments would not be graded. I also reassured students not participating in the PSE programme/study with their parents that their grades for the course would not be negatively affected. I then requested that students take the letter home to their parents and talk with them about it and decide whether they would be able to participate or not. The bottom portion of the letter was to be completed indicating their decision and then returned to me the following week during class. I would like to point out that the majority of school letters to parents were usually mailed home to ensure that the letters arrived rather than give students the responsibility of delivering the letters to their parents. I decided against mailing the letters home because I wanted students to be able to make an informed, independent decision about participation in the study/PSE programme.

There were several reasons for having students deliver the letters themselves. One aim was to offer the students a choice to decide whether to participate or not. I was sensitive to the fact that the students had the least amount of power in this situation. Some students chose not to bring the letter home to their parents. I took this action to mean that their decision was not to participate, and I respected their decision. My other reason for having students deliver the letter to their parents was to learn more about the communication process between the students and their parents. In the majority of families who decided to participate, there was some discussion and negotiation between the students and their parents with regard to the decision to participate in the study. In many families, there seemed to be some pleasure from parents and their children about

their agreement to work together during the PSE programme and study. I obtained this information by asking parents and students how they decided to participate at the beginning of the interview.

Issues of Privacy and Confidentiality

In this study, I promised anonymity and confidentiality. I spoke to all participants about these issues. Spradley (1979: 38) writes 'informants have a right to remain anonymous'. He explains that there are minimal requirements for ensuring anonymity and that the researcher must continually ask how anonymity can be maintained during the course of the study. He states that 'protecting privacy extends far beyond changing names, places, and other identifying features in a final report' (Spradley, 1979: 38).

I used pseudonyms in my notes, writing drafts, and on identification labels of audiocassette tapes. Spradley (1979) writes that the use of pseudonyms to protect the privacy of participants is a minimum requirement. In contracting individuals to do transcription of the audio taped interviews, I was careful to choose persons who had no way of identifying the interviews or participants of my study.

In terms of confidentiality, I promised the parents and their sons and daughters that I would not provide information regarding the content of the interview to other interviewees. In other words, I would not tell a parent what her 14-year-old son said during the interview or vice versa. I wanted all participants to feel comfortable in giving their responses. For example, there were times when the students did not want to discuss a topic with their parents due to embarrassment. Prior to the start of the study, the students and I agreed that if they were embarrassed about an assignment topic, they would work on that specific assignment alone. I did not tell parents that their children opted to work alone on an assignment that embarrassed them.

At the end of an interview with one parent, the parent realised that she had not seen one of the written home assignments her daughter had completed on one of the course topics. This parent asked me if she could take a look at her daughter's paper. I was

aware that the possibility existed that her daughter may have chosen to do this assignment by herself. So, I felt an obligation to protect the student's privacy. Diplomatically, I pointed to the stack (eighteen inches high) of home assignments from the course and told the parent that her daughter's paper was in the pile. I also let the parent know that I would try to find her daughter's assignment and I would talk with her daughter about it. Some days later, I found the assignment in question, made a copy of it and gave it to the student. I told the student that her mother had expressed interest in the assignment during the interview. At that point, the student told me that she didn't mind if her parent read the assignment, so I told the student to keep the copy and show it to her mother.

Ethical Issues

Spradley (1979) writes about the responsibility of the researcher to communicate the aims of the study to the participants. In meeting this responsibility, I wrote a letter to the students and their parents identifying myself as a research student working on a doctoral degree at King's College London. I described the aims of the study and also explained what participation in the study could mean for those who agreed to participate. I defined the relationship between myself and families who agreed to participate as a partnership, one in which we would work together with everyone informed about the study. The study took place over a twenty-week period, so I felt the need to periodically communicate about the aims of the study. It was not possible to expect participants to be fully informed about the aims of the study from one letter. Spradley (1979) notes that the aims of a study need to be continually reinforced during the course of the research.

By the end of the semester, many had forgotten that I would contact them to arrange an interview. In fact, some appeared surprised. Some of the reason for this was that at least four months had elapsed since the course began.

In the letter describing the aims of the study, I also emphasised to students and their parents that the grade given students for the course would not be affected by whether students participated in the study or not (see Appendix 9 - Letter to Parents and

Students). And I decided that the primary data collection, the interviews would take place after the course grades were submitted and sent home. I was very conscious of my responsibility as a teacher and the power/authority I have in that role as compared to the lack of power of my students. Furthermore, I did not want my students who were not participating in the study to feel that they would be treated differently than those who were participating.

As a researcher, I was constantly thinking about practicing good ethics while conducting the study. I was fully aware that my study involved topics that could be sensitive issues for parents and their children to discuss. In addition, I was sensitive to the fact that I was involved with real people who may have problems and fragile relationships. Spradley (1979: 38) cautions researchers that 'personal gain becomes exploitative when the informant gains nothing or actually suffers harm'.

I made one decision not to interview a 13-year-old female student in the study because I had heard that her father and mother had separated and her father had moved out of the family house while the study was in progress. I felt that it would be unethical and insensitive for me to place this young girl in a position of potential harm by interviewing her about the home discussions as some of the topics dealt with the family. I did, however, interview her mother who was eager to participate in the interview. Her mother wanted to talk to me about what had happened at home and her concerns about her children. At the end of the interview, I shut the tape off and we talked about the recent events.

In this study, there were many potential ways participants could have positive gains or value. Spradley (1979: 38) refers to this gain as 'fair return'. He explains that although what participants gain during a study varies, researchers must consider participant gains and not ignore this need. Early in the course and study what appeared to be simply parents and their children working together on home assignments became for many something much more fruitful and beneficial. When interviewing parents at the end of the course, I was not prepared for the numerous positive comments made by parents. It

was not that I doubted the potential benefit of children and their parents working together during the PSE programme and study, it what just that I was unaware of what was happening in the homes of the participating families. I was extremely pleased with what parents said to me about the effects of the study for them and their teenage children.

Parents told me that they understood their son or daughter better since participating in the study. One mother said that participation in the study had 'planted a seed' for her and her son to continue their discussions for the future. Many parents said 'thank you for doing this' and 'thank you for this opportunity'. A number of parents felt that this study could be of value to children and their parents at other schools around the world.

Some of the children said they liked having special time with their parent(s). One female student who described herself as the oldest of five children told me that she had very little time on her own with her mother due to the time her mother needed to spend with her younger siblings. This student was happy to have some time alone with her parent and they chose a time in the evening when the younger children were in bed for the night. Another male student told me that he and his parents spend a lot of time in their own separate lives. Although he would not have announced so to his peers; he felt comfortable telling me that it was nice to have some special time with his mother. A Swedish male student told me that he got to know his parents better while working with them during the PSE programme. Many of the students told me that participation in a research study was important and they seemed excited about being part of this. One of my male students told me (his teacher) that he wanted to help me as a student with my research.

Another decision I made during this time was not to interview the parents and children who did not participate in the study. Although it would have been interesting to learn why some families were not able to participate, I did not believe it would be ethical to attempt to do this. Two students came to me individually and told me that they wanted to participate in the study, but that their parents did not want to. This bothered me

because I was concerned about the feelings of these two students. I told the students that approximately half of the students/parents in the eighth grade would not be participating in the study, so they would know that their families were not the only families unable to participate. I reassured them that there would be no repercussions for not participating.

Prior to the start of the PSE programme and study, several male students asked if I was going to embarrass them during the PSE programme and study. My response to them was that I would not intentionally embarrass them, but that I might not know what could embarrass them. At that point, I told the students that if a PSE assignment/topic was embarrassing that they could opt to work on this by themselves like the students who were not participating in the study. The students were satisfied with this arrangement.

Analysis and Interpretation

> Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process. (Marshall & Rossman, 1995: 111)

During this study, I accumulated a massive amount of data which included transcripts from 90 interviews, 'field notes' in a research journal, and written home assignments from the PSE programme. As the interview transcripts were completed, I identified them as transcripts at the top of each page in the right hand corner. In addition to the label of 'T', I wrote the pseudonym next to it and the page number. I then organised these transcripts in five large binders. I worked with the data immediately and found that my feelings of being overwhelmed by the large data set were being replaced by excitement about the process of discovery. One of my strengths is organisation, so I applied these skills in a systematic manner when I worked with the data.

I transcribed approximately 25 interviews myself which was helpful because I became very familiar with the data. However, I soon realised that I would not be able to transcribe all of the interviews myself. So, I found a person to do this for me. This was

costly in terms of money, but it saved me a tremendous amount of time. Although I was no longer transcribing, I was listening to the interviews on tape and correcting the transcripts for errors.

I coded the transcripts line by line, page by page, noting themes, patterns, and relationships as well as differences and exceptions. Lofland and Lofland (1995: 187) note that 'codes are efficient data-labelling and data-retrieval devices. They empower and speed up analysis'. Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 45) state: '...coding qualitative data enables the researcher to recognise and reconceptualise data allowing a fresh view to what is there' or as Strauss and Corbin (1990: 57) note: 'put the data back together in new ways'. As I identified codes and themes, I compared and contrasted new data as it was collected.

Listening to the taped interviews was very valuable because I became very familiar with my data and of aspects of the interview that may be lost on paper, like tone of voice, mood, and emotions of interviewees. 'The analytic process demands a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to those data and an openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life' (Marshall and Rossman, 1995: 114).

Interviewing during the second phase of the study was very intensive from January to May 1997. It was not possible to spread the interviews out over a longer period of time because I would have lost contact with some or many of the families who participated in the study. There was quite a turnover in families leaving school every summer. Between June and August 1997, a number of IM families in the study would leave England and relocate to other countries.

During the study, I found that writing and rewriting facilitated the analytic process. Initially, my writing about findings was general and a bit vague and far from any deep conceptualisation. Lofland and Lofland (1995) write:

> Sorting and stewing in the materials, many analysts simply begin to write despite the fact that there is still a lot of ambiguity about how exactly to say

> what it is you want to say. *In beginning nonetheless to write, the analyst lunges into the unknown.*. (Lofland and Lofland, 1995: 205)

Importantly, Maykut and Morehead (1994: 151) note that writing about the findings of qualitative research '...requires additional analytical work' which can lead to 'analysis-through-writing' enabling researchers to 'clarify emerging themes and patterns, and provide leads to follow in subsequent data collection efforts'. Early on in the research process while conducting the first nine interviews, I began analysing and writing about the emerging theme of international mobility and its impact on the families in my study. This 'analysis-through-writing' (Maykut and Morehead, 1994: 151) was instrumental to the research process in facilitating the focus and direction of the study.

Lofland and Lofland (1995: 207) further note that the 'physical activity of writing can produce a new next level of your own discovery of what you have to say about something'. For example in Chapter 4 to follow, I have written about family time and the challenges IM parents may face in light of globalisation and their international mobility. Based on my analysis, I have called this theme, 'Family Time: Bind or Bound'. I have noted that IM fathers may experience a 'time bind' (Hochschild, 1997) as they are pressured to spend more time at work instead of at home with their families. In contrast, the majority of IM mothers spend large amounts of time with their children in the absence of their partners who frequently travel internationally for their corporations. I refer to this phenomenon as 'time bound' whereby the women and their children are 'bound' together.

In addition to writing, I continued to listen to the interviews and reread the transcripts. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) note the importance of writing and reading during analysis:

> The analytic process of writing is paralleled by that of reading. As writing is a positive act of sense making, so too is reading! (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 110)

During the study, final conclusions were not made until all of the data were collected and analysed. I realised the importance of remaining open to the data and not to prematurely close data collection and data analysis.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four criteria for judging the quality of qualitative research which include: Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility is a measure of validity that addresses the question: Does the researcher's interpretation and reconstruction of the participants' views of their culture and their world match? Transferability refers to generalisability. Can the research outcomes be generalised or transferred to other studies of similar context? Dependability has to do with reliability and looks at whether the process of inquiry is logical, traceable and documented. Confirmability addresses the question: Can the analysis, interpretations and findings be verified?

> The validity and reliability of qualitative data depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher. Systematic and rigorous observation involves far more than just being present and looking around. Skilful interviewing involves more than asking questions Content analysis requires considerably more than just reading to see what's there. Generating useful and credible qualitative findings through observation, interviewing, and content analysis requires discipline, knowledge, training, practice, creativity, and hard work. (Patton, 1990: 11)

It is critical to apply careful rigorous methods and employ scrupulous data management when analysing qualitative data. During my study, managing data in the ways previously noted by Patton (1990) facilitated my ability to probe, explore and get on the inside of a complex social phenomenon, such as the international mobility of families and the management of transience.

Credibility of the study and trustworthiness of the findings and interpretations were enhanced by using triangulation. Fetterman (1998: 93) states that 'triangulation is basic' to qualitative research. The researcher 'compares information sources to test the quality of information' (Fetterman, 1998: 93). Denzin (1989) identified four types of triangulation using multiple data sources, investigators, theories and methods. As

mentioned earlier in this chapter, I interviewed as many members of individual families as possible. In some cases, I interviewed both parents and their adolescent daughters and sons and found that discussions about specific topics were corroborated. A criticism of many family studies is that rarely is more than one member of the family interviewed and that usually mothers are relied upon to report for other family members in their absence. (Gelles, 1995).

In the classroom, I observed students and listened as they described the communication and interaction they had with their parents. I made notes in my research journal after class. It was not possible to have another investigator work on the study with me. However, research colleagues of mine who were familiar with qualitative methodology did code some of the transcripts from the interviews and then we discussed possible themes and categories. The helpfulness of this arrangement was limited, however, as these colleagues were not involved in the study in other ways, so had limited exposure to the whole picture. Although they could do basic coding, there were limitations in their ability to link patterns.

In addition to applying triangulation, I created an audit trail throughout the course of the study. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) write:

> Careful documentation of the conceptual development of the project should leave an adequate amount of evidence that interested parties can reconstruct the process by which the investigators reached their conclusion. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 230)

My audit trail consisted of the raw data (audiocassette tapes) of interviews, computer and hard copies of transcribed interviews, copies of coded transcripts, research process journal, notes from classroom observations, PSE programme materials and written home assignments completed by the parents and their children.

In terms of transferability, it would not be tenable to generalise the findings of the study. However, the theoretical questions and themes raised in my analysis are likely

to have relevance to the study of the millions of IM families and thousands of international schools around the world (see Chapter 8).

I stopped interviewing in May 1997 when it became apparent that a 'saturation point' had been reached (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). 'When each additional interviewee adds little to what you have already learned, you stop adding new interviewees' (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 72). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) make reference to the term 'adequacy' which they explain has do to with the amount of data collected. 'Adequacy is attained when sufficient data has been collected that saturation occurs and variation is both accounted for and understood' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 230).

I probably could have stopped data collection sooner, but I was very interested in what the participants had to say and I did not want to miss anything significant. May 1997 was also an appropriate time to stop because a number of the families in the study would be relocating to other countries.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations and some of the limitations to be identified could also be strengths that may enhance the trustworthiness of the study. First, I was the sole researcher with a large amount of data that presented challenges in terms of the labour involved in data collection and analysis as well as the time spent in the research process. However, being the sole researcher was a benefit because there was consistency in collecting and analysing the data. Second, I had a small sample of fathers, 9 in total. However, as noted earlier, fathers are often absent from studies and mothers may be asked to report for the absent fathers, so this study makes a contribution in attempting to fill a gap in the literature. Third, I had limited training and experience in interviewing adolescents when I started the research. Wescott (1992a: 78) notes: '…training, especially on questioning techniques, has been identified as an essential requirement if the interviews are to succeed'.

Conclusion

Selecting data and writing up findings from a large data set can be quite challenging. Ely et al (1998) note the complexities and dilemmas involved in writing up qualitative work – dilemmas about which data to select and which data to omit. It is not unusual to become 'attached' to the data and not want to 'let go' of the data. Lofland and Lofland (1995: 262) refer to the potential difficulties involved in excluding data as the 'agony of omission'. I made decisions about which data to include or omit based upon the key themes which emerged from coding and focused on these key themes in relation to the thesis as a whole. Patton (1990: 429) notes that 'focus is essential'.

In the chapters to follow, the use of qualitative methodology powerfully draws out the complex dichotomies inherent in the lives of the IM families in managing transience. This is where my study makes a significant contribution not only to the literature, but more importantly, toward learning about the complexities of being an IM family.

CHAPTER 4

RELOCATION STRESS: THE HUMAN COSTS

Introduction

This chapter and the next present an analysis of the effects of international mobility on the lives of the families I studied. In this chapter, the emphasis is on some of the costs of mobility, but in Chapter 5 the emphasis is on ways in which the families survived, and even thrived, in these circumstances. As we saw in Chapter 1, previous research on this subject has tended to concentrate on the former rather than the latter. My object is to present a fuller, more complex and more balanced account.

Specifically, this chapter explores how relocation and transience affect the emotional and social health of families precipitating major changes in the family unit, the ways that families communicate with each other and live together. Although internationally mobile families have existed 'since the beginning of time', there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of these families as a result of the expansion of global economic markets and changes in transportation, especially accessibility of air travel (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 6). These economic changes have produced significant personal and social consequences for families. However, until recently, there has been little discussion or research exploring these issues.

Ekberg (2000) notes:

> The impact on people's lives of a rapidly globalised world is certainly far from understood. Debates about globalisation often emphasise the economy and leave out many other relevant dimensions, particularly those related to social and psychological changes in the everyday lives of people. (Ekberg, 2000: 5)

The idea that capitalist economic markets produce personal and social consequences for people is not a new idea. In *The Risk Society,* Beck (1992) examined the risks and social costs imposed on German families and communities as a result of modernisation and the pursuit of economic gain. Beck notes:

> As soon as people enter the labour market, they experience mobility. ...There is a hidden contradiction between the mobility demands of the labour market and social bonds. (Beck, 1992: 94)

The purpose of this chapter is to examine these changes that I will refer to as the human costs. This chapter is organised around six themes that have emerged from systematic data coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). These themes are:

- Guilt about Grief
- Grieving Children
- Transience: Uprooted Children and Children Without Roots
- Women at a Loss
- Parents Fear for their Sheltered Children
- Family Time: Bind or Bound

Perhaps the best way to begin to have any understanding about the lifestyles of internationally mobile families is to look at the stories told by the families themselves. The sub-set of interview extracts selected for this chapter are drawn from key informants who spoke about the challenges they face with repeated relocation, the effects on their children, and the changes in family dynamics (see Table 9). During the analytic process, I selected these extracts that each told a little story and reconstructed them around the major themes that emerged to tell a larger story.

Table 9.

Respondents in Chapter 4

Name (Pseudo-nym)	Parent (P) or Student (S)	*Birth Country/ Country of Origin	Nationality	Other Details
Frank	P	The Netherlands	Dutch	2 children
Lynn	P	US	American	3 children
Denise	P	US	American	2 children
Patrick	P	US	American	3 children, Partner of Sandra
Diane	P	Canada	Canadian	2 children
Benedicte	P	Denmark	Danish	2 children
Helena	P	India	Canadian	2 children
Mary	P	US	American	2 children, Partner of Jim
Jim	P	US	American	Partner of Mary
Laura	P	Sweden	Swedish	5 children
Dede	P	Canada	Canadian	2 children
Maritza	P	Mexico	Hispanic	3 children
Sherry	P	Canada	Canadian	3 children
Maria	P	Brazil	Brazilian	3 children
Norma	P	US	American	2 children
Martha	P	Finland	Finnish	2 children
Helga	P	Sweden	Swedish	3 children
Susan	P	US	American	3 children
Judy	P	US	American	3 children
Sandra	P	US	American	3 children, Partner of Patrick
Sally	P	US	American	3 children
Samanha	P	US	American	1 child (adopted)
Oscar	S	*	Swedish	Son of Mareka (in Chap. 7)

* (Birth Country/ Country of Origin or Nationality not identified)

Before introducing the first theme, it is important to address the nature and frequency of relocation when exploring the human costs of moving because each family's experience is different. In my study, approximately half of the forty-five families reported having lived in at least three countries. Other families lived in a transient state, moving from country to country. For example, several families had lived in five or six countries. One family had moved eighteen times. Some families were 'one tour' families meaning that they moved from their country of origin to the 'host' country

and then back to their 'home' country. Several families had two 'tours' to England and back to their country of origin.

Guilt about Grief

Moving can be a very emotional experience. During the interviews, many parents spoke about the stress and emotional pain their children have experienced when they have relocated. Whilst interviewing these parents, I observed through their body language and the words they spoke that they feel a deep sense of guilt about moving their children. This experience was very fresh in the minds of some parents and they spoke about the move as if it happened yesterday. Although parents acknowledged there were many benefits to living an internationally mobile lifestyle, they also admitted there were negative effects as a result of relocation. The possibility that their children might experience adverse effects from moving led to parental concern and guilt feelings. My findings confirm earlier work that parental guilt is a common theme in the literature about relocation (Gordon and Jones, 1990; Lefkow, 1994).

A father of Dutch nationality, Frank described discussions he and his partner had with their two children about moving and the stress his two children experienced when they moved.

> *...the other discussions we had with the kids is the fact that there was a stress level for them to be moving around...first moving from Holland to the States, then coming from the States to England. (Interview with parent, Frank)*

At this point in the interview, Frank had a painful expression on his face. He continued:

> *Oh, it was **terribly stressful**...losing their friends, especially after having lived in Minnesota for seven years and of course...big part of their life... especially their conscious life was American...and they were both at difficult ages, Martha was fifteen and Paul was twelve, something like that. (Frank)*

There is real concern and fear that this internationally mobile lifestyle will harm their children. As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the fears is that children may lack 'a sense of place or belonging' (Gordon and Jones, 1990; Langford, 1999). Another parental

concern is that children may not live long enough in one place to develop emotional security. An American mother from the United States talked about her feelings and concerns for her children in this way.

> *...I read a poem somewhere that a kid was saying... 'How many more times are you going to make me die before...' you know...the sense of dying emotionally when he leaves a place. And I read that and thought, Oh...it is heartbreaking. You see, I'm a kid that grew up...my parents were still in the same house. I have a* ***very, very*** *stable background emotionally because of that and I look at my kids and I think...Oh...what are we doing to them? (Interview with parent, Lynn)*

Another mother whose family has had two tours to England and back to the United States spoke about her friends in the international school community who are involved in schools and their reasons for doing so.

> *...They're worried about their children...they know they've taken them out of a ...they've ripped them out of a country that they're comfortable in or they've moved a lot... and they want to make sure that those kids know that their parents are around. (Interview with parent, Denise)*

There was also concern and worry that their children would not be able to adjust to their 'home culture' if there was one. Piet-Pelon (1988: 53) claims that parents 'risk raising children who rather than being at home everywhere, are at home nowhere'. There will be more discussion about the concept of 'home' in Chapter 5. In addition, many parents realised that their children are growing up in a sheltered environment within the international school community. This can be positive and negative. These issues will be explored more in depth in a later section of this chapter.

Grieving Children

As discussed in Chapter 1, many children in IM families experience some loss as well as problems with unresolved grieving (McCluskey, 1994; Pascoe, 1994). There is the loss of friends as well as changes in the family unit and lifestyle. Mallon (1998) writes about loss:

> Each child responds to loss from the basis of their own relationship with the person or thing that has been lost, depending on their own pre-dispositions, personality, sensitivity and all the other factors that go to create each unique individual. (Mallon, 1998: 19)

It is important to understand that some IM young people may experience a higher amount and intensity of grief '...that which others may ever experience, even in a lifetime' (Pascoe, 1994: 8). Mallon (1998: 9) argues that 'adults have the benefit of past knowledge and experience to put loss into perspective; for children this is not the case'. She writes this about adult experience with loss:

> Whilst we may have found ways of coming to terms with sorrow, found coping strategies, seen how others managed or believe that pain will pass as it has in the past - children do not have that comforting knowledge, however meagre it may be. (Mallon, 1998: 9)

IM children see their fathers less often and they spend less time with their extended families. They change homes, schools and their daily lives are affected. Ekberg (2000) claims that children and young people have been left out of the debates about the personal and social consequences of globalisation. She argues that 'children ought to be central' (Ekberg, 2000: 5).

It is important to note that whilst there are many IM children who are transient, there are also children who may live in the 'host' country for many years and consequently have friends who are transient. The result is that children may experience loss either way or both ways. Norma McCaig, Director of Global Nomads International states: 'There is something very painful about the dynamic of being left, because you don't have the excitement to help you through the transition' (qtd. in McCluskey, 1994: 11).

When I interviewed the students, I did not question them about relocation stress and the losses they might have experienced. This was not an area that I could delve into with the students. Ethically, I did not feel comfortable opening up this sensitive topic that for some students might have been buried away, because it could be too upsetting to talk about. However, during the PSE programme, we did discuss the topic of friendship and the challenges associated with relocation. In that way, those students who wanted to talk could do so. During these classroom discussions, I found that students had more casual friends than close friends. This was an interesting finding

and I wished that I could have learned more about this as it raises many unanswered questions. How do these adolescents deal with repeated loss? Do they continue to make friends? What types of friendship do they make? Do some of these young people avoid developing close friendships, never allowing 'others to get too close to them emotionally', as suggested by Pollock (1994: 73)?

A Canadian mother, Diane described the difficulty her daughter has experienced when her friends move on. This particular family is able to decide how long they stay in a place. So, whilst this family is not experiencing frequent relocation like other families, their daughter is experiencing the continual loss of friends.

> *...when I see my daughter all of a sudden having four really good friends for the months of September and October and...all of a sudden she doesn't have them anymore...I have been right there for all of that. I've seen it sort of a... and it's not just with my daughter...I see it with all of her friends around her... and they go in all sorts of different directions... (Interview with parent, Diane)*

When I asked Diane if the school could do more than is being done to help children deal with this problem, she responded:

> *No, I don't think...you can't... [she lowered her voice at this point and had a sad look on her face] ...except with the parents...to understand all that. (Diane)*

A Danish mother, Benedicte also talked about the problems her children experienced living in an international community. Like Diane's family, this family has some control over the decision of where and when they move.

> *...at this school it is hard to keep friends for many years...I mean...most of the pupils are here for a number of years, only two or three years...my children are here for many years, but when you grow close to a friend...all of a sudden...the family is leaving...and that can be really hard. (Interview with parent, Benedicte)*

Some parents have made attempts to assist their children to overcome the challenges of living in a transient community by actively helping their children to keep in contact with friends who have moved on.

But, I mean that's the way life is and it just teaches the children to have an open mind and get friends with someone else...and if they really like this friend...keep in contact by either letter or fax or telephone...and that is what we did with my son a couple of years ago. I don't know if I mentioned it to you last time...umm...he [my son] was very close with a boy called Ryan and they kept contact and then the next summer holidays...my son...we gave him a ticket to go to Baltimore for three weeks, and he was with his friend for three weeks and we expected that his friend would come and spend three weeks with us, but he hasn't done, so... (Benedicte)

Researchers argue that children who experience a frequent loss of friends as a result of relocation or living in a transient school community learn 'valuable social skills for connecting quickly with others' (Wallach and Metcalf, 1994: 92).

> *...and I find that... my children have been here five years and one thing that they feel sad is...they spend so much energy making friends and we take them home, they sleep over, we take them to the club, to the restaurant, etc. and they have a very nice relationship...and then the next year they hear that child has to go away and they feel sad... (Interview with parent, Helena)*

McCaig recalls her childhood as the daughter of an internationally mobile executive for a pharmaceutical corporation. She states:

> ...the experience we had was people cycling in and out of our lives every two to three years. As part of the expatriate community, those who are more rooted for a longer period of time are still exposed to very high turnover. (qtd. in McCluskey,] 1994: 11)

One couple and another mother spoke about the difficulties their children have experienced attending a transient international school with a high student turnover.

> *...the turnover of students is unbelievable...so, our son's had to make new sets of friends every year, and... (Interview with parent, Jim)*
>
> *...every year... (Jim's partner, Mary)*
>
> *...and that's extremely difficult because that's just like moving every year in the States to a different school. I think in the long term it will be good because he's learned how to make friends, but you know...it's still difficult and it's a big adjustment because...you know... we'd only moved twice in the States and to come over when he was nine years old... (Jim)*
>
> *...fourth grade... (Mary)*

...and going to one school from kindergarten through the fourth grade and then coming here...that was a big change...then having to recycle your friends every year. (Jim)

Every single year he lost his best friend...until seventh grade. Then we stayed stable for a little bit. (Mary)

On the issue of transience, Wallach and Metcalf (1994: 92) found that 'if your child is not the newcomer, then he or she is often about to lose his or her best friend'. Another parent brought up the issue of high turnover rates of students at the school.

...the statistics say...seventy-five percent...there is a turnover here, seventy-five percent a year. (Diane)

Some IM children do not learn how to develop and keep close friends (Werkman, Farley, Butler, and Quayhagen, 1982). On this issue, Diane talked about the difficulties for young people to create new friendships and have friends leave continuously.

...then it goes away...then it all of a sudden goes away. Then having to start all over again the next year. It's hard enough as you know at that stage even acquiring and keeping and nurturing friendships...at that age. (Diane)

Non-transient families living in transient international communities may find the continual cycle of losing friends more difficult that frequent relocation (McCluskey, 1994; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001).

A mother of Hispanic ethnicity, Maritza spoke about the loss her children have experienced when they have moved.

...and I know for them [my children], since they have been moving several times ...they have left friends...that is something that has become very important and very strong. So, even when they have left friends, they try to keep in touch. (Interview with parent, Maritza)

...or they think about their friends or sometimes they feel sad about not remembering them because they were so young when they left. (Maritza)

A Canadian mother, Sherry spoke about her daughter's reaction to the move to England and her daughter's reluctance to talk about the friendship discussion assignments during the PSE programme.

> *...That was early in the year when...Bonnie [my daughter] was dealing with leaving her best friend. So, it was a time when she was particularly sensitive because she felt hauled off to Britain so to speak...you know...so, as a result I was the last person she wanted to talk to with about friendship because I had just stood in the way of her...you know what I mean...She already knew the answers. 'This is what it takes to have a friend. This is what it takes to be a best friend. This is what it takes to keep a friend...and you know that...I know that, so, there's nothing to discuss'. That was her kind of abrupt attitude toward it [PSE assignments about friendship]... (Interview with parent, Sherry).*

I responded to Sherry: *'But maybe she might have been protecting herself a bit...'*

Sherry replied that perhaps her daughter's behaviour was not as a result of moving, but due to adolescence. She stated: '*...Some days are more teenagery, rebellious than others. And that day perhaps was just along those lines. She's not generally like that at all'*. Sherry again began to talk about her daughter's close friend left behind in Canada and about moving.

> *...she [my daughter] and Linda [daughter's friend] are just like major blood sisters and inseparable and had been for a long time. So, I don't remember having relationships like that when I was her age. So, that could have been part of the reason [reluctance of daughter to discuss friendship topic]. And not only that, but there was an unwillingness on her part even up until...you know...for several months to really reach out and make close friends. There is to this day. But, you know...which is six months later. But there was a real unwillingness at that time. It was sort of like...you know...I'm here but I'm really not here. Yeah, and you can be quite sure that I won't be making any friends here because what I've discovered and what life is...that when you make friends, you leave them...you know, like so she was dealing with some kind of desertion, panicky feeling. So, I'm sure there were a lot of feelings around all that...that she didn't want to delve into. (Sherry)*

Not all parents agree that it is easy for their children to make new friends. McCluskey (1994) noted that some parents reported that the friendships made by their children would be everlasting whether or not they kept in contact. In some settings, for example, in Foreign Service postings, Smith (1991) found that some children

developed close friendships that lasted over time. On the other end of the spectrum, parents of transient children reported that their children had more casual, superficial friendships (McCluskey, 1994). Findings in my study also showed some differences in parental perceptions of the kind and nature of friendships made by children. An American father, Patrick spoke about friendship issues at the school:

> *...in some ways it's a friendly school and in some ways it's a superficial friendliness...because the ones [students] that have been here for awhile they know how to turn these friendships over. (Interview with parent, Patrick)*

It has been suggested that personality type plays a role in a child's ability to make friends. For example, some researchers claim that 'extroverts thrive in the overseas environment; introverts may have more difficulty' (Wallace and Metcalf, 1994: 92). There is, however, much support in the literature warning that IM children may have difficulties making and maintaining intimate relationships with others (Pollock, 1994; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). This important topic warrants further research.

During one interview, an American mother, Lynn mentioned to me that she thinks that children who move around a lot, especially in an international environment, seem to be a little more open to talking with parents. She claims that this is in comparison to what is happening with her friends and their children back home in the United States. These thoughts led her to the issue of moving and the effects on her family. She states:

> *Well, I think that when you keep moving that your kids will be having to keep breaking away from those peer groups and...they're with you when you make the next move and it takes them a little time to branch out into other peer groups... And I think that's actually good for your family life, although it can be hell. As you know...we have our own share of ups and downs when we move to a new place...especially when we moved here. My youngest son was really quite broken up about leaving home and umm...you know...there are those...some of the negatives ...you know...the grieving over leaving...(Interview with parent, Lynn)*

During the interviews, many IM families in my study spoke about increased family cohesiveness and openness partly due to their international mobility. Chapter 5 explores these themes in more depth.

There is another type of loss which IM children may experience. Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 168) refer to what they call a 'loss of lifestyle' meaning there may be a change or even loss of the usual 'patterns of daily living'. This type of loss can be quite challenging and can affect IM children's level of independence. Parents from eight families reported that their children experienced a change in lifestyle as a result of moving. A Finnish mother, Martha remarked that she and her family moved to England seven months ago and since that time, she has observed that her children have had less autonomy compared to when they lived in the small Finnish village which was their previous residence. She explained that all activities *'must be organised'* for her children and they need to '*be transported from place to place'* by parents. A Swedish mother with five daughters, Laura reported a similar experience.

> *...It's quite different here in England. I mean...I have to drive my daughters somewhere, pick them up... they don't even go shopping by themselves. I have to take them somewhere. It's really restricted compared to Sweden. (Interview with parent, Laura)*

Both Martha and Laura explained to me that in Scandinavian countries, children attend the school closest to their homes and because of this, they can walk to and back from school. Parents from Sweden, Denmark, and Finland commented that most Scandinavian mothers in their 'home' countries work full-time which means their children usually have less adult supervision and may spend hours by themselves or with friends socialising after school. A Canadian mother, Dede mentioned that her daughter has had to adjust to a change in her lifestyle since moving to England and that her daughter has realised that *'she took it [life in a small town]for granted'.*

> *...because of the fact that we came from a small town. This is like worlds away from what life is at home. And so, you know...for Cathy [my daughter], like I mean one of the biggest disappointments about moving here...you can't walk up and down the block and your friends don't all live within two blocks of you. (Interview with parent, Dede)*

Transience: Uprooted Children and Children without Roots

Change is part and parcel of everyday life, obviously with enormous individual variation. (Jowett, 1989: 92)

Some children grow up in secure emotional conditions and experience transitions periodically with beginning school and/or the birth of a brother or sister (Jowett, 1989). In contrast, Jowett (1989) notes that other children may experience the usual transitions mentioned earlier plus some severe upheavals associated with the loss of a parent(s) or relocation. Transition implies a 'temporary' state that hopefully is followed by equilibrium or getting back to some sense of normality and security at some point. Many IM families live in a constant state of transition, referred to as transience in the research literature (Wallach and Metcalf, 1994; Werkman et al, 1982). Lykins (1986) notes that no one has studied the short and/or long term effects of relocation for IM children and IM families overall. Living in a state of transience can be a problem for anyone regardless of age, however, transience can be especially problematic for adolescents because of the growth and development stages they will go through.

> Not only did I grow up overseas, but my whole life was transplanted every two to three years to a place with different soil, different sunlight, and different rainfall. By the time I settled in, unpacked, made friends, and found roots, it was time to move again. Growing up is tough for everyone, but I had to do it on the move. (Michael Featherstone, son of U.S. Foreign Service Officer, qtd. in McCluskey, 1994: 10)

One mother, Maria spoke about the frequent communication she and her partner have with their children about relocation. The parents are from Brazil and their three children are from many places. This family has moved eighteen times. She states:

> *We talk a lot together because we move a lot and so we...every time it is a new experience and so you have to talk a lot, you have to show how...it's our lives, you know...we are working for them and for the future. So, we have to show, you know, reality. (Interview with parent, Maria)*

Maria spoke about her oldest child, a daughter who is fourteen years old.

> *She and I...especially her...she is very shy, so she sometimes...we have to explain why we are moving and why the life is like this or we have to do that, and she has to understand sometimes what...it is very hard for her. (Maria)*

When I interviewed Maria, she and her family were about to move for the nineteenth time. Her three children were fourteen, twelve and nine years old. Her partner had already moved to the new location ahead of the family. Maria appeared stressed and had concerns about their next destination which was the Dominican Republic. This family had only lived in England four and one half months prior to receiving news of the job transfer.

Diane spoke about the communication she has had with her daughter about friendship, the stress of going to a transient school, and the possible consequences of these challenges for adolescents.

> *...I know that the age level right now, sort of thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen ...is a really difficult age group, but you know...peer pressure...peer relationships...it's even more difficult being at a school like this...and I have certainly talked very openly about this with my daughter, being that this is a transient school, you know...most of the children are here for probably a two year period, and I think that is very difficult for them because they don't really get their feet planted. I don't think they get their feet firmly on ground with a sound relationship. It can be either a negative or positive thing...they can either shy away from it or they can try to make so many relationships and not see...I think it is a real pressure with these kids at a school like this. (Diane)*

Diane spoke about the upheaval children experience due to transience. She also gave an example of the uprootedness she has observed in many American families who are transferred abroad.

> *I see a lot more upheaval with them...and a lot more in children who...live for the fact that they are going back to America and they want to be back. And this not only comes...and this actually would come from the parents... the mothers who are really...feel very uprooted having been pulled out of middle America...Kansas City or whatever and are having to come and live in a foreign country...it's not looked as much as a luxury or learning experience. I think that it is hard for the kids to take positive steps...and the only reason I can say that is because we have other international experience and having lived in Switzerland for four years...There were children from all over the continent...from England, some from America, from Canada, and it was more of a...it was a far more secure situation because the kids were there for a lot longer period of time. It was much more of a...so, relationships were much easier... (Diane)*

Diane makes an important point in that the length of the assignment affects family adjustment. Pascoe (1994) refers to the length of an overseas posting as a 'tour of duty.' The length of the 'tour of duty' is an important factor in how and whether or not families reach out and adjust to the 'host culture' (McCluskey, 1994; Pascoe, 1994). McCluskey (1994: 10) refers to families in brief overseas postings as 'short term sojourners' and notes that they may never leave the 'tourist mentality'.

> *...because they weren't going away...or mom wasn't unhappy in thinking that she was going to be back in a year and a half or three hundred and sixty-five days... When we moved to Switzerland...and we didn't know if we were going to be there for four years or ten years...that's because of my husband's own business... But, so...it was far more easy an adjustment...here now...we know that we would never leave England now because we feel strongly that our daughter will finish her education here, and we have the luxury of being able to do that...where most kids haven't... (Diane)*

As noted in Chapter 1, Simon, Cook, and Fritz (1990) claim that children react to relocation in a similar way to their mother's reaction to moving. As Diane points out, if the mother is happy, the children are more likely to adjust to the move with less difficulty.

A commonality amongst IM families is that there are sudden changes in their lives. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, some families do not always receive much notice of an impending relocation. A mother of Canadian nationality and Indian ethnicity talked about the sudden changes her family has experienced.

> *...you know, my children...about five years ago...we had to leave the country within forty-eight hours and we just took one pair of outfits that we had and went to Washington D.C. ...stayed one night, and then went to Montreal and stayed one year and then we moved to London. So, my children have been used to sudden changes, etc...and so my son...now is coming to a point where he is saying...now where are we...when are we moving to another place... because we had been so used to moving...so much... (Helena)*

It has been argued that IM children may develop a 'distinct migratory instinct' that stays with them in their adult lives (Pascoe, 1994:174).

> *He [my son] was born in Rwanda...we stayed there for a few years and then we were in Zaire for a few years and then in Montreal in Canada and then here. So, you know...this is the first time in his life that he stayed in one*

> *school for five years and it is actually the first time. And, in a way he likes it...and in a way he doesn't like it...because I think he has got a Bohemian aspect about him...all of us actually in the family...but, what's good is...because we've got family in Rwanda and in Canada...he's always seeing them, so at least he's getting a change. (Helena)*

As discussed in Chapter 1, Useem refers to this urge for change that IM children may experience as 'having sand in their shoe' (qtd. in Killham, 1990: 5).

An American mother speaks about her family's experience in their international school community. She has a son and daughter, fourteen and twelve years old respectively.

> *...this community is very transient and my family as kids have been transient... this is about their fifth home in their short lives, and I think there are a lot of good things about that, um...I never moved once from the time I was four until I was nineteen and didn't have a clue about what that was like...(Interview with parent, Norma)*

> *...and I think that it makes it easier for making friends, for bonding...because everybody is in that kind of transient mode and they don't know how long they are going to be here, where they are going next or...this will be the longest they have been...four years is the longest they have been...any where. (Norma)*

Women at a Loss

Many women who relocate with their families report that they experience loss. Their losses emanate from the changes imposed on many aspects of their lives as a result of relocation. In addition to the losses that women experience, relocation may cause special problems or circumstances that lead to women feeling 'at a loss' at what to do. Special problems may include how to handle a problem that comes up in the family or at school. These women frequently find that they are not able to obtain advice from their extended families because, in most cases, their parents and siblings have not had experience parenting and child rearing in an overseas environment.

The families who participated in my study come from middle- to upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds. Approximately 90 per cent of the men and women were college educated and established in professional careers. For example, some of the

women in my study were trained as physicians, attorneys, nurses and teachers. Many of the men were educated in economics and international business. As discussed in Chapter 1, relocation is often particularly stressful for women in expatriate families due to the huge gap these women experience in their lives when they move (Harvey, 1985; Hubbard, 1986). This gap has to do with loss of professional development and career. For example, many women are actively employed in their home country, then are not employed when they move abroad. Women in this situation may find it difficult to adapt 'to this change in role and position within the family' (McCluskey, 1994: 8). A few women may be able to take sabbatical leave from their jobs. However, the majority of women may be unable to obtain work permits in their resident or host country. So, for many women, careers are put on hold or given up when they move abroad. This means that suddenly, these women have a lot of unstructured free time that did not exist when they lived in their home country. In order to fill this particular gap, many mothers become involved in the schools their children attend. Another issue is that many women may not realise the 'loss' to their professional careers as a result of repeated relocation. Losing years of professional experience and career development during their 20s and 30s may not be gained back (Gaylord, 1979; Weissman and Paykel, 1972).

Earlier research in the 1960s and 1970s linked depression in women with relocation (Weissman and Paykel, 1972; Seidenberg, 1973). These women were frequently portrayed as 'victims' with 'damaged self-concepts' addicted to tranquillisers and alcohol (Weissman and Paykel, 1972; Seidenberg, 1973). I interviewed forty-five women in my study. These women did not portray themselves as 'victims' nor did I observe that they had 'damaged self-concepts.' I perceived the women in this study to be survivors. They worked hard to care for their family and to make some kind of purposeful life for themselves. Although they did not complain about their lives, they did speak openly about the challenges and frustrations they face when living and raising a family overseas. Some women referred to their internationally mobile lifestyle as 'reality', 'it's our lives' and 'that's the way life is'. There was an acceptance of the life and an attitude that there are gains as well as losses in living an

IM life. There is further discussion of the gains and benefits of IM lifestyles in Chapter 5.

My findings echo earlier research by Brett (1982) who found that women were supportive of their spouses' careers. This does not mean that they were always happy about the number of times they relocate, the frequent absence of their partner or starting over again in a new place. Many IM families experience a significant decrease in the time that they, as a whole family are able to spend together.

A Swedish mother spoke about the changes to the social structure and social network when a family moves to a new country.

> *...you have less of the social structure around you, you don't have your family, you don't have your old friends around you. (Interview with parent, Helga)*

Helga continued to explain that when you arrive in a new country, your social network is non-existent, so you have to begin to build a new social structure and network of people.

> *When you're new, you can't just go into the supermarket and say 'Hey, say... I'm new...does anyone want to come home and have coffee with me?' But, you can always go to the school and meet other moms that are new on the parking lot or somewhere and you can go and have coffee or do something or if you get involved in the classroom, you will very soon make friends. It's a very good place to make friends if you need to make friends for moms. (Helga)*

An American mother, Susan spoke about her involvement in schools as a strategy for dealing with the loss of a social network and her need to create a new social network after moving overseas. In the extract to follow, Susan describes her quick immersion into her children's school to create a life for herself. She became a classroom mother, or 'room mother' as it is frequently called, to assist the teacher in her child's class. Room mothers participate in arranging a variety of academically related and social activities. Involvement as a room mother also provides an opportunity for parents to get to know their child's classmates as well.

Well, in this school, I have run the girl scouts and then the brownies. I've been involved in the plays, and I've been classroom mother every year. This year I'm seventh and eighth grade liaison, so as soon as I got here, you know... I hit the ground I arrived in August and I was room mother by the end of the month. So, I have been very involved in the school because here [England] if you're not involved in the school as a parent and your spouse is out working...you really have no life. There is no way to get to know people. So, for me...it was a perfect avenue to know people. (Interview with parent, Susan)

Susan also talked about the choices she has made in her life, the choice referred to in the literature as 'existence for others' (Beck, 1992: 112). Many women are in a similar position to Susan. On the surface, this seems like a personal problem for individuals, when, in reality, Beck (1992) contends that it is a societal problem that is a consequence of capitalist economic model in practice.

> *My job is to raise happy, healthy kids. That has been my job, and that's my life. I gave up anything else...any other hope of doing anything else with my life except that. (Susan)*

Beck (1992) notes:

> As long as women bear children, nurse them, feel responsible for them, and see them as an essential part of their lives, children remain wished-for 'obstacles' in the occupational competition, as well as temptations to a conscious decision against economic autonomy and a career. (Beck, 1992: 111)

A Swedish mother, Helga, whose family spent some years in France, described her observations about American mothers in the international school community.

> *It was very obvious when we lived in France that very many...especially very many Americans not speaking French...were very afraid of the French society. So, there were moms who were...would use the school as their second home and they would spend all their time there. They would make themselves as needed as much as possible...get involved in everything just to benefit from it. And also to feel that they were involved in something important, but also because I think they were scared of the life outside. And I think you can dig yourself too deep into school...in the international schools...where you have this enormous amount of moms who don't work, I think that this easily can become a sort of habit all your life...you're on every committee and you're involved in every grade...and you're room mother in every class to an extent that you don't have a life of your own. (Helga)*

Helga explains that it is easy for a pattern of mothers being over- involved in schools to form due to the lifestyle of internationally mobile families. Helga makes an important observation that perhaps women find becoming involved in their child's school an easier substitute than having to start all over again each time they move.

> *...I think it's very easy in a situation in a new country that you sort of take an easy way out to get involved...and to feel needed and then forget about your own interests, your own things...especially since in most families...the husbands are travelling a lot. So, after school or over the weekends, many moms are...have to be very involved with their kids. I think it's very important to try to get another life, too. (Helga)*

Helga raises a very important point. There is a danger for women in these situations to go from 'no life' to 'no life of your own' where their lives are filled with their children and school. Both of these situations can be problematic for women. Some women try to find a balance.

Lynn spoke about the difficulties she has experienced whilst living abroad.

> *...with the husbands away quite a bit...I mean...it really is a challenge and I mean...I feel like I've been pretty lucky as far as up till the past year...my husband was around quite a bit. Now, he does a lot of travel to South America and Africa...and...you know...I can relate a bit to a single parent who...you know ...has to handle everything on their own. It's not an easy job...especially not being near your extended family... (Lynn)*

Some women in expatriate families experience changes to their self-concepts and challenges to self-esteem when they relocate. These issues raise important questions. What are they going to do if they don't work? What will they do with their time? They do not have a professional network to tap into nor do they have their extended family of friends nearby. Once relocated, women need to create new identities and seek out ways to find purpose and meaning in their lives to maintain healthy self-esteem (Seidenberg, 1973; Harvey, 1985; Jonietz, 1988). One American mother spoke about what many women who move abroad experience.

> *...they come over here...you have to remember too...a lot of these parents are career oriented...they've had jobs...they come over here and* ***boom****...what do they do with themselves? Some of them run around and see every castle there*

> *is...but most of the people get involved in school because it's their way of feeling good about themselves, too. (Interview with parent, Denise)*

Gaylord (1979: 187) is frequently quoted as saying that women 'pay the greatest price for the family's move'. I question the validity of this statement. It is accurate to say that in the majority of IM families, it is the women who spend large amounts of time with the children helping them to adjust to their new home and school and relationship difficulties. It would also be accurate to say that it is primarily the women who are at risk of experiencing social and professional difficulties as consequences of relocation because they are not connected socially and professionally when they first arrive in a new country. However, each family member and each family unit experiences relocation in individual ways (Hausman and Reed, 1991). Each member of a family has the potential to experience loss and emotional anguish as a consequence of moving and when one member experiences loss, there may be a loss of family equilibrium (Smith, 1991). As mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, I perceived the women in my study as 'survivors'. Perhaps these women are more resilient when experiencing change because they have a healthy self-esteem and intact self-concepts (Hausman and Reed, 1991; London and Mone, 1987). Critically, my study explores the complexities in the lives of IM women and aims to offer a more balanced account in contrast to earlier work which focused on transition based upon a 'deficit' or 'problem' notion.

Parents Fear for their 'Sheltered' Children

Many parents spoke of the international school community as being closed, safe, and a very different environment compared to other school communities. It has been noted that children growing up in international school communities are 'very sheltered' (Pascoe, 1994: 210). For example, children in international school communities are rarely exposed to the violence and gun culture that is so problematic in American schools in the United States (McCluskey, 1994). In addition, McCluskey (1994) claims that young people attending international schools are not affected by the poverty and racism that are prevalent in disadvantaged communities. Another consequence of living in a sheltered international community is that 'children from

various social classes rarely meet' (Ekberg, 2000: 6). Ekberg (2000) claims that children from more affluent backgrounds interact with other children from privileged backgrounds and they perceive the world in the same ways. Another major difference is family structure. Families in international school communities are usually two-parent, nuclear families and this is certainly not representative of the world at large.

Judy expressed mixed feelings about the 'unreal' environment her children are growing up in.

> *...there are so many families at this school that are a nuclear family with the mother, father, kids. In fact, abnormally so in this...in our culture within this school. But, you know...part of me says that my kids are not getting exposed to the real thing, but the other part says...hey, what's wrong with being in a group of friends that have, you know...what I consider to be...well, I should say... normal. It's not necessarily normal, but a very basic... (Interview with parent, Judy)*

An American mother, Norma expressed her concern for her children if and when they move back to the States. Her concern addresses the issue of re-entry to the country of origin which can be difficult for IM individuals and IM families. The majority of families who have lived overseas may be unaware of the many personal changes they have undergone until they re-enter their 'home culture' and experience some adjustment problems (Pascoe, 1994). Norma also notes that individuals and families returning to their 'home culture' can fail to realise that the people and places they have left behind have changed as well during their absence.

> *...these kids may or may not be going back to public schools or whatever and I think my children, especially, are going to be shell shocked...they are going to be amazed at what's happening...unless we would move back to Anchorage. But, there too...there were many, many problems and I don't think these kids are really aware of what's happening. (Norma)*

Another American mother spoke about discussions she and her partner have had with their sons about the 'real' world.

> *My son's experience of family is so healthy and they [sons] think we are so old fashioned and so protective because first of all...he has lived all of his school life outside the United States and all his friends have two parents at home, so no one is divorced and has major problems. I'm sure there are*

> *underlying problems everyone has...but, uhhh...he has always experienced such goodness in his life that's quite interesting...quite interesting. One time ...I think it was last year or the year before...someone took a pen and marked on the bathroom doors or gouged into it or something like that...and uhhh... my son came home and said... 'I think our school is really bad, someone did this... and, it was just, it was just a really bad thing to do.' (Interview with parent, Sandra)*

It has been noted by Ekberg (2000: 6) that children from more affluent backgrounds 'live in a supposedly safe paradise'. In the following extract, Sandra relates a discussion she and her partner had with their son about the 'real' world.

> *...and we said, oh dear, that's bad, but there's such worse things and we talked about things in other schools that are so horrific...and that really not many bad things happen here. And all you know, they go home to families that are good families, and his cousin was coming to visit for a couple of weeks...from Minneapolis, his father...my husband's brother teaches at a school there, uh ... lots of...I mean it's...my husband's brother has been mugged three times I think ...and if he left anything outside of his house, it's been stolen. It's just... it really is a different world, and my boys have been around the world...travelled in Third World countries and done some... they're very worldly in that respect, but they are also quite protected and have not had to deal with problems that families in the United States have had to deal with.. (Sandra)*

Like Sandra's family, a common characteristic of IM families is that they have a more 'insular family structure' (McCluskey, 1994: 8). IM families may also be isolated and protected within the international school community. When I interviewed the adolescents in the study, I did not directly question them about their feelings and possible fears about leaving the international community environment and returning to a less insulated and less protective environment. However, some students requested that other topics be added to the PSE programme. Dealing with gangs was one topic brought up by students. These students reminded me that they may return to the United States and live in cities where gang activity is quite high. There was fear about this.

During the study, one family was facing the imminent possibility of returning to the US because of marital separation and impending divorce. Susan was faced with a very

difficult decision. Should she move back to the States and take her son and daughter out of the international school community where they have felt safe and happy? Susan tells me about a discussion she had with her daughter.

> *...I was about to say that raising children here...it is a big...it's a wonderful environment to raise children in. Now I came out of northern New York City in Fairfield County and Greenwich which was very high pressure...high social pressure, high academic pressure at the private school they were in...I mean it was...I mean you were really a suburb of New York and then the crime that flowed out of it. The environment here is wonderful. The kids feel safe, and I as a parent...not only on campus...you know...I feel safe with the kids whether I go into London...wherever I go. It's a great place to raise children. Unfortunately I don't think the people realise that until they go back...or they're forced with going back...which colours what I want to do with the rest of my life. Do I want to stay here...single or married... because the kids have such a great situation? Do I want to go back and then have to deal with the pressures of drugs and crime and all the pressures that don't appear here at least you know...on the surface... (Susan)*

Large school systems in the US may differ from international school communities overseas in the degree and intensity of relationships children make (Eakin, 1988). There may be more of a sense of 'connectedness' in international communities 'where school, community, and social life are often intertwined' (Eakin, 1988: 45). The following extract addresses this issue.

> *...my daughter said to me the other day... 'You know mom...you know I know you want to go back. I know you miss your family, and you know I know...under the circumstances it would be better, but I just want you to know that I love the fact that here I can have boyfriends and girlfriends and there's no pressure and we're just...we're all so close. And, that won't be in the States, I just know it.' And she's right. It just isn't that way. (Susan)*

Family Time: Bind or Bound

This section of the chapter examines family time and the challenges faced by IM families who are trying to increase and maintain quality time with their families. In her book, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work,* Hochschild (1997) writes about the time pressures and the 'reversal of the social worlds of work and home' that, she claims, many American parents employed by US corporations face from the work world.

> The social world that draws a person's allegiance also imparts a pattern to time. The more attached we are to the world of work, the more its deadlines, its cycles, its pauses and interruptions shape our lives and the more family time is forced to accommodate to the pressures of work. (Hochschild, 1997: 45)

Gillis (2000) claims that father absence and a lack of family time are common problems especially for families in the Western world. Jensen (1998) describes a similar situation in Europe. The issues of father absence and shrinking family time may also be seen in other capitalist driven economies, like Japan. Time pressures affect parents and children from different family structures. While IM families face some of the same challenges and conflicts over family time as families who are not internationally mobile, there are some differences and complications for IM families. Single-parent families and families with both parents working who are not internationally mobile experience what Hochschild (1997) refers to as a 'time bind' when their job responsibilities take them away from their children. In contrast, the majority of women in IM families spend large amounts of time with their children in the absence of the fathers. I refer to this phenomenon as 'time bound' whereby the women and their children are 'bound' together. This may lead to children becoming very dependent on their mothers which may be problematic for adolescents who are needing to become more independent as a normal process of growth and development (McCluskey, 1994: Pascoe, 1994).

Globalisation and the drive of market economies have created new challenges and dilemmas for IM fathers, their partners, and children. These expatriate families are usually two parent families as this type of family structure may be the only structure that can exist due to the work demands on the expatriate and the need to have one parent (usually the mother) with the children. In most cases, mothers run the household and take care of the children and the day-to-day living. Expatriate men, frequently referred to as 'absent fathers' in the literature, travel all over the globe and spend little time with their families (Pascoe, 1994; Gillis, 2000). The expatriate men of IM families can often experience a 'time bind' when they are absent from their families in some cases for weeks and months at a time (Hochschild, 1997). A Swedish

student in my study, Oscar spoke about his father's absence from home. Oscar and his father did manage to work together on two of the eight assignments during the PSE programme.

> *Well, it's just...when he's home...he's home about three months a year... yah, probably a bit more...about four months or something...and he...when he's home, he has a lot of time to be with us. He never talks about work at home... and I think that's good. He's very tired when he comes home after all that travelling ...he probably...wants to be able...to talk to his family. (Interview with student, Oscar)*

Oscar spends a lot of time with his mother. He has two older siblings, a brother and sister, away at university. Oscar's mother mentioned to me that Oscar has been lonely since the departure of his brother and sister to university and the frequent absence of his father.

Of the 90 interviews conducted in this study, nine of the interviews were with fathers. The majority of fathers were simply not available for interview. When I attempted to increase the number of interviews with fathers beyond the nine interviews already conducted, their partners acted at gatekeepers and protected their spouse's time. I accepted the decision of the gatekeepers because I viewed them as 'legitimate' and 'to be respected' (Seidman, 1998: 39).

Father absence and potential tensions on father-child relationships raise many important questions. Is this challenge for 'modern' fathers anything new or is this the latest in a series of problems for fathers and their children? Are these fathers just carrying out the traditional role of fathers as the 'breadwinner' and 'provider' of the family? Are international corporations responsible for causing these conflicts for fathers in the pursuit to expand global economic markets? Gillis (2000) claims that the absence of fathers from the home and the tensions between fathers and their children are not new developments. Historically, he traces these issues back to the industrial revolution when men's work left the home for the public workplace. He notes:

> Men ceased to be the givers of life and became the chief providers for life, virtually reversing the previous relation-ship between fatherhood and motherhood. (Gillis, 2000: 229)

However, what is new according to Gillis (2000) is the complicated nature of the current economic conditions as a result of globalisation. He states:

> I want to argue that the marginalisation of fathers in western countries is a structural rather than moral problem, that we must look beyond the family and even the nation to understand it. It seems to me to be linked in important ways to the current restructuring of the global capitalist economy, to profound changes in class as well as gender relations that this has occasioned, and to the fate of the nation-state itself. Just as the first crisis of fatherhood, the crisis of patriarchy, was tied to the shift from commercial to industrial capitalism organised on a national basis, so the eclipse of breadwinner fatherhood coincides with the end of the linkage between capitalism and the nation-state, and the beginning of a new political/economic order whose future we can only dimly perceive at the moment. (Gillis, 2000: 227)

Sally, an American mother with three sons speaks about the importance of the family and the stress placed on the family due to the father's frequent absence from the home. She used the PSE programme as a vehicle to initiate and discuss this issue with her oldest son. This family is from a small town in the Midwest region of the United States. This is their first move overseas as a family. At the time of the interview, they had lived in England for five years. Sally spoke about the value conflicts she and her partner have been struggling with since their relocation overseas. She relates to me the discussion she had with her oldest son during the interview:

> *...sometimes I've thought that what I hold as values, you know...important to me...maybe I don't live my life... and I know it's particularly...that's true for their dad. I think if they [sons] were going to look at us as examples what kind of values they have, I think they'd have totally screwed up idea... what...if they just looked at our lifestyles...I think it would because I think... not just my husband, but most husbands...they go to work...they work...they work...they work... and sure they get paid well, but, you know...is that why we're...family is much less important over here, I think. To me, not that it's a lot less important...it's just hard to have the time we had over in the States. It doesn't seem that the family itself is as valuable because we just...you know... dad's not ever there. (Interview with parent, Sally)*

In the preceding extract, Sally addresses two conflicts that reflect the societal and cultural ethos of capitalist economies. One is that the family may be perceived as less valuable than the corporation and the other problem involves the amount of time people spend 'on work' and 'at work'.

> The more women and men do what they do in exchange for money and the more their work in the public realm is valued or honoured, the more, almost by definition, private life is devalued and its boundaries shrink. (Hochschild, 1997: 198)

Overwork is an issue for many employees. Relationships with family may be harmed and personal health may suffer. Shor (1991) examined the work habits of Americans and found that they are working longer hours, approximately one month more per year in the early 1990s than in 1969. Rowen (1991) argues that Japanese employees work longer hours than Americans or individuals of other nationalities, but notes that there is a movement to change the work ethos and decrease hours. In addition, Shor (1991: 154) comments on the premature deaths of thousands of Japanese employees referred to as 'Karoshi' deaths, which means 'death by overwork'. It is estimated that there are 10,000 'Karoshi' deaths annually in Japan (Rowen, 1991).

Family relationships may be adversely affected by the absence of the father. Sally spoke about her sons' feelings of being 'let down' by their father's absence from important events in their lives.

> *But the disappointment of their dad not being there for this or for that...not ever being able to come to any of their sports after school...it's just like, well...you know...in the States...it's just easier to get away. It's not easy over here [England]. So I always think that we've not given them [our sons] the right values. (Sally)*

Sally reported to me that while she was discussing this issue with her oldest son, she gave him this advice:

> *Don't do as we look like we're doing. You have to realise that this family is **really** important and being a husband and father when you grow up should be high priority in your life, **not just** providing for them. (Sally)*

It has also been noted that companies are deliberately using tactics to encourage workers to feel appreciated and feel more 'at home' while working and many people are obtaining 'emotional support' in the workplace instead of at home and in the community (Hochschild, 1997: 200).

> *...and at first...it was the adjustment of not having him around, but...he enjoys his job as well which makes it even more difficult...because he enjoys what he's doing when he's at work and he gets his strokes from his job of which we [family] can't compete with those...power, achievement...I think he has his priorities screwed up...you know...I mean...I didn't want that them [our sons] growing up thinking this is the way a dad should be. (Sally)*

Competition between corporations and families may be intense (Hochschild, 1997).

She notes:

> Although work can complement - and indeed, improve - family life, in recent decades it has largely competed with the family, and won. While the mass media so often point to global competition as the major business story of the age, it is easy to miss the fact that corporate America's fiercest struggle has been with its local rival- the family. (Hochschild, 1997: 203-204)

> *...well last year wasn't quite as smooth sailing as it had been the first four years... Well, then he's thinking...well, maybe my priorities have been screwed up (Sally laughs)...but when like everything's going well at work... then he didn't see it. He's seeing it now. (Sally)*

Sally's partner was offered another international posting, but the family decided against this and returned to the Midwest region in the US at the end of their fifth year. The challenge, however, may not be over. Sally and her family will face the complexities of re-entry and potential difficulties associated with returning to their 'home culture' (McCluskey, 1994; Pascoe, 1994; Smith, 1991). As discussed in Chapter 1, Brett (1982) and Hausman and Reed (1991) note that expatriate men who refuse an assignment may experience negative consequences for their decision.

Maria spoke about her partner's absence from home.

> *Well, my husband...he is always travelling...but, when he comes home...the first thing he asks is about the children and school...and so he wants to see everything and know everything...what has happened during the week...what you have...what you did...what he needs to know. He* ***is trying****. (Maria)*

Hochschild (1997) claims that some parents avoid the 'time bind' by thinking that their children need less time and attention by becoming 'emotional ascetics' themselves. She notes:

> They made do with less time, less attention, less fun, less relaxation, less understanding, and less support at home. They emotionally downsized life. (Hochschild, 1997: 221)

Lynn, an American mother talked about her partner's job responsibilities and the effects on his life and the family.

> *...my husband will oftentimes say like, 'Gosh, I have no social life'. He doesn't other than what I create for him by the women I meet and you know...we start doing things together as families. But the men are just so busy...the only good thing, and umm...I can't criticise my husband because he does take time with the kids when he's home, but...you know, you can't always make decisions about how much time he's going to spend away...you know, he has quite a responsible job with his company, so...my husband gets home at 7:00 at the earliest and he's one of the better ones. I mean I hear some men don't get home...I mean they might as well be sleeping at the office because they don't get home until 9:00 or 10:00, they get up and they're gone at 6:00 in the morning. (Interview with parent, Lynn)*

Samantha, an American mother had a similar story:

> *...I'm sure all the rest of the mothers have told you, too...they're [fathers] gone so much! Even if they do come home during the week...my husband doesn't get home before 7:30 or 8:00...most of the time...and by the time he eats dinner and goes over homework and everything else or whatever needs to be done that day... it's tough and it's sad...(Interview with parent, Samantha)*

On the issue of shrinking family time due to increased work responsibilities, Boss (2002) writes:

> Given the increasing demand for people to work what we now too glibly call "24/7", knowing how to manage work and family is essential for the well-being of individuals and families in a culture of competition. (Boss, 2002: 11)

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the significant themes that have emerged from the data in my study in relation to the human costs and challenges of being an IM family. In this

global age, IM families can indeed experience hardship. The stories told by the families in this study reveal some of the costs associated with relocation and living with transience which raise important questions. How do IM families manage the costs and challenges of being IM? How do IM families survive, and in some cases, even thrive?

Chapter 5 explores some possible answers to these questions, but also adds to the complexities involved in attempting to even begin to understand how the IM families in my study manage the challenges of international mobility and transience. Chapters 4 and 5 together, however, provide a more balanced and nuanced view of the complexities and changing phenomenon of being an IM family than past research accounts.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONALLY MOBILE FAMILIES: SURVIVING AND THRIVING AN IM LIFESTYLE

Introduction

In the first chapter where I considered some of the key research findings into the IM family, I suggested that much of the early work was characterised by a 'deficit' overtone. That is, being mobile has been constructed as a problem with some potentially damaging outcomes such as maternal depression, distress and dislocated adolescence. Much of the early research focused on these themes and attempts to ameliorate these difficulties. To some extent, I suggested that this trend in the work might be due to much of the research coming from a psychologistic approach. It might also have had a connection with the cohorts under study.

Although Chapter 5 needs to be read alongside Chapter 4 – to appreciate the complexities of international mobility – the analysis presented in this chapter represents a significant departure from earlier work on the subject. In my extended interviews with a privileged cohort, while the IM families demonstrated awareness of the dilemmas which can occur as a consequence of transience, what was clearly evidenced was the resilience of these families. What emerged from the data was that families deployed a range of strategies through which they worked to ameliorate difficulties whilst ensuring that the family not only survived, but thrived during periods of relocation. Thus, a significant element of my thesis is a concern to disrupt the older negative discourses on international mobility and offer a more nuanced, open and ambivalent approach towards the process.

In this chapter, my object is to move away from characterising families as passive victims of mobility and present them as active agents 'managing transience' and deriving benefits and forms of satisfaction from their experiences. My discussion of benefits will, where relevant, be accompanied by some discussion about challenges

which may become disadvantages, for, in reality, it is often the case for both situations to co-exist for IM families. In this chapter, I will refer to potential disadvantages as challenges.

The IM families in my study are advantaged in terms of resources and support. They have many personal resources, family resources as well as external resources available to them. They use their resources and newly established support networks to lessen the tensions of the restructuring process. The parents and their adolescent children employ active strategies for dealing with the changes associated with relocation stress and seek out the positive aspects or benefits of living an IM lifestyle. For purposes of this study, Boss (2002: 62) defines family stress as 'a neutral construct'. She writes:

> It [family stress] is neither negative nor positive. It simply means pressure on the family. The degree of stress that results in the family and the appearance of deleterious or positive effects depend a great deal on the family's perception and appraisal of the situation. Family stress simply means change - a disturbed equilibrium in the family system. (Boss, 2002: 62)

There is evidence that the IM families in the study are able to draw from their confidence and mastery of managing past relocation experiences successfully. It is not unusual for them to strive for opportunities that geographic mobility and living an IM lifestyle present in terms of being part of a rich, multi-cultural international environment. Boss (2002) offers an explanation of why some families may seek changes and challenges and thrive in stressful situations that may cause crisis in other families.

> It is likely that some families simply enjoy and tolerate more stress than others. This characteristic also indicates the importance of the family's perception or appraisal of the stressor event or situation. It may be that some families become bored without a constant string of stressful events to excite them or without the challenge of constant problems to solve. Such families may seek out new stressors. They like to move often, they travel often, they seek out competition, and they like a challenge. They may engage in all sorts of stressful activities without negative effects. (Boss, 2002: 62)

The final section of the chapter considers the critical role that international schools can play in supporting IM families to manage relocation and transience in a positive way.

Many parents, particularly mothers use the international school community to monitor and to maintain close contact with their uprooted children, to pursue their perceived parental responsibilities, and if needed, to establish a support system for themselves.

Based upon the systematic coding of the data, the following themes emerged:

- Restructuring and Strengthening the Family
- On Their Own: Managing Independence and Cohesiveness
- Parenting IM Children
- The Complexities of 'Roots', 'Home' and a 'Sense of Belonging'
- Using Resources and Building Social Support Networks.

The extracts selected for this chapter are a sub-set of the total data set and are drawn from mothers and their teenage children who I found to be key informants in explaining the complexities of their lives and the many dichotomies they experience as IM families (see Table 10). I have been able to include extracts from interviews with several mothers and their daughters or sons in the same families in this chapter strengthening the validity of my findings in the study through the use of triangulation (Fetterman, 1998; Denzin, 1989) as a research strategy.

Table 10.

Respondents in Chapter 5

Name (Pseudonym)	Parent (P) or Student (S)	*BirthCountry Country of Origin	Nationality	Other Details
Sheila	P	England	British	3 children
Maria	P	Brazil	Brazilian	3 children
Norma	P	US	American	2 children
Susan	P	US	American	3 children
Samantha	P	US	American	1 child (adopted)
Helga	P	Sweden	Swedish	3 children, Mother of Annika
Nicola	S	*	*	Daughter of Ingrid
Ingrid	P	Belgium	Belgian	3 children, Mother of Nicola
Margarite	P	Canada	British Canadian	2 children
Lynn	P	US	American	3 children
Sherry	P	Canada	Canadian	3 children
Helena	P	India	Canadian	2 children
Raphaella	P	Italy	Italian	2 children
Sarah	P	US	American	2 children
Annika	S	*	Swedish	Daughter of Helga
Monique	P	France	French	3 children
Benedicte	P	Denmark	Danish	2 children, Mother of Nikolas (Chap. 6)
Sandra	P	US	American	3 children, Partner of Patrick (Chap. 4)
Mareka	P	Sweden	Swedish	3 children
Dora	P	US	American	4 children
Maritza	P	Mexico	Hispanic	3 children

* (Birth Country/Country of Origin or Nationality not identified)

Extracts of interviews with students in the study are limited in this chapter because I did not have permission to interview the students about moving. I had permission to interview students about parent involvement in their education, but not about relocation. I believed that it would be unethical and potentially harmful to broach the subject of relocation with students. However, some students brought the topic up, so I have been able to glean some insights from a small number of students. In addition, written narratives from 3 students have been included in support of the interview

transcripts (see Appendix 10 – PSE: Home Assignment #5, 'Country, Culture & Family').

Restructuring and Strengthening the Family

This section examines how IM families restructure and redefine themselves to meet the challenges of relocation. Drawing from the American literature on family stress and adaptation, McCubbin and Patterson (1983) contend that healthy functioning families usually work to restructure and redefine themselves as a family unit to adjust and adapt to change. They write:

> Observations of family coping with transitions and non-normative life events outside of the family unit reveal that the family strategies of coping are not created in a single instant and not directed at a single stressor. Because the family is a system, coping strategies involve the management of various dimensions of family life simultaneously: (a) maintaining satisfactory internal conditions for communication and family organisation; (b) promoting member independence and self-esteem; (c) maintenance of family bonds of coherence and unity; (d) maintenance and development of social supports in transactions with the community; and (e) maintenance of some efforts to control the impact of the demands and the amount of change in the family unit. (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983: 24)

In order to manage the changes associated with relocation, IM families must be able to successfully manage key family functions as outlined above in order to manage mobility effectively. Although the process of adaptation in the management of family functions may be similar for most families regardless of whether they are mobile or geographically stable, what is unique to IM families is the nature and complexity of living an IM lifestyle.

The process of restructuring relates to families under stress who 'make changes in their existing structure which may include modifications in established roles, rules, goals, and/or patterns of interaction' (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983: 22). Boss (2002: 62) uses the metaphor of a 'high-tension bridge in discussing 'high-tension families'. She notes:

> Keep in mind that family stress does not have to result in trouble. A high-tension bridge, for example, is intact and functional despite the tension; some high-

> tension families also remain solid and functional. Like the bridge, high-tension families must have flexibility and "sway" in their structure if they are to avoid collapse, however. In highly stressed but functional families, there must be flexibility in family rules, roles, and problem-solving skills. They must be able to change constantly to adapt to the situation at hand, and there must be a continuing negotiation between the family's pressures and supports. Such flexible family systems can withstand much pressure because not only do they have support and strength but also they have the ability to sway under pressure. (Boss, 2002: 62)

For IM families who move abroad this typically means they must uproot themselves from their extended families and other key support people from their communities. What remains is a smaller family unit (usually mother, father and children) whose family members consequently will need to depend more on each other to meet their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Meeting the challenges of relocation by 'adjusting to a new situation indicates a willingness of the family unit to provide a sense of security and meaning in a new situation' (Hausman and Reed, 1991: 255).

In the restructuring process, the majority of IM mothers in the study (as noted in Chapter 4) put their careers aside and reverted back to traditional roles of mothering spending more time with the children in the frequent absence of their partners. IM fathers who usually spend more time at work and in work related international travel struggle to meet their work demands and family responsibilities and are often faced with the difficult choice of having to meet work needs instead of family needs. Many of the fathers struggle with trying to spend brief periods of time with their families. A key tactic of IM families involves their communication patterns which are organised so that fathers are 'briefed' and updated by their partners on the day-to-day happenings in the lives of their partners and children. Maria, a Brazilian mother spoke about the communication she has with her partner when he returns home after work related travel.

> *...Well, my husband...he is always travelling...but, when he comes home...the first thing he asks is about the children and school...and so he wants to see everything and know everything...what has happened during the week...what you have...what you did...what he needs to know...(Interview with parent, Maria)*

Moreover, two mothers in the study spoke powerfully about the importance of the family when living an IM lifestyle. Both women commented that the family is the stabilising factor and must be strengthened when living a mobile lifestyle. In the following extract, Helga, a Swedish mother explains that the family has to be strong in order to deal with the changes associated with living an IM lifestyle. She also comments on the idea of 'roots' and the need for families to serve as the child's roots. These findings echo earlier research outcomes noting that the 'home is the family, where a child feels as though he [or she] belongs (Pascoe, 1994: 168).

> *...I think that with many families who are mobile and move around...where lots of kids don't feel really much at home because they have so many homes.. they've lived in so many countries...I think their family tends to become their home or their root...they're rootless in a geographical sense, but, I think that the family has to be in a way the roots. I think that's also the part of the reason that I'm involved in school, I think that the family needs to be strengthened when you move around. You need to be involved in each other in what you do because you have less of the social structure around you, you don't have your family, you don't have your old friends around you. (Interview with parent, Helga)*

The need of the family to strengthen itself in response to change is noted by Boss (2002). She writes:

> Each family has a special unity of its own. The systemic strength that mobilises a family is often observed when one of its members is in trouble. The family becomes more than the sum of its parts, taking on an extra strength, like strands of steel bound together in one huge cable to hold up a suspension bridge. The extra strength from joining forces and pulling together in the same direction yields support that helps many families through adversity. (Boss, 2002: 21)

Margarite, a mother of French Canadian background described the family as being 'all important' when living an IM lifestyle explaining that everything may change, but that the family remains constant. She contends that the family must be the 'anchor', grounding or rooting the children.

> *...I think that when travelling around...the family is all-important...it's the anchor. I mean you can change school, you can change house, you can change countries, but you don't change your family...you know...basically, the family is the anchor. That is where the child comes from. (Interview with parent, Margarite)*

In earlier studies about relocation and international mobility, researchers have used the same metaphor describing the family as an 'anchor' symbolising the family as 'the source of stability in a changing environment' (Wallach and Metcalf, 1994: 92).

The issue of family strength raises many important questions. Are IM families stronger to begin with or do these families develop strength derived from living an IM lifestyle? Perhaps for some families, it is a combination of the two. It does take strength and belief in oneself to uproot and relocate.

On Their Own: Managing Independence and Cohesiveness

This section examines outcomes of restructuring and strengthening of families to accommodate change. This would usually mean that family members of healthy functioning families (geographically stable and internationally mobile) would become closer together. There is, however, some uniqueness and complexity in the lives of IM families related to their international mobility and multi-cultural experiences.

In the stories told by the families in my study, it became apparent that they employ a variety of strategies to manage relocation. Talking frequently and openly, as a family combined with efforts to increase unity and cohesiveness of family members are tactics deployed to manage relocation and international mobility. Spending more time together is a strategy for overcoming isolation. Researchers who have examined family responses to the changes associated with relocation have noted that:

> Features of functionally coping families include family ability to identify stressors and develop a solution-oriented approach rather than blaming, family cohesion, clear communication, and role flexibility. (Anderson and Stark, 1988: 38)

Paradoxically, as IM families are extending their cohesion, they also need to become more independent in the sense that they usually cannot rely on their extended families, friends, and other important people from their support networks to help them as they may have done in the past. For purposes of this thesis, cohesion is understood as 'integration' or unity (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983: 17). In the following extract,

Samantha, an American mother reflects upon the openness and cohesiveness in her family that she feels relates to her family's IM lifestyle.

> *...I think living in Holland did make me be more open because when I look at my family and...nobody shares things with their children like I do... everything is very open...we can talk about things. I hope it's always that way. But, I think it was helpful. We had to become more independent being away from our family...we didn't have any relatives telling us how we ought to do this. We were here on our own...you know...and maybe that brought us more closer and open to each other...that could be. (Interview with parent, Samantha)*

Perhaps Samantha's family communication patterns changed as a result of the many influencing factors she suggests, the forced independence and need for family self-reliance.

Researchers have found that a majority of IM families become closer when relocating and living an IM lifestyle (Hausman and Reed, 1991; Useem and Downie, 1976; Harvey, 1985, Werkman, 1972, 1975; Smith, 1991; McCluskey, 1994; Pascoe, 1994). Hausman and Reed (1991) note:

> Families who agree on the importance of the move and who share an interest in successfully making the transition will find that their commitment to a common goal will bring them closer together. (Hausman and Reed, 1991: 255)

At least half of the 45 families (mostly mothers) in my study described their families as being 'close' or 'very close'. In addition, several students made comments about their family relationships, but did not use the words 'close'. One male student described relations in his family as 'very friendly' and another male student said that he comes from a family 'who love each other and stuff''. However, it is important not to assume or misinterpret how respondents define the word 'close' and to recognise that other words may be used when describing the personal nature of family relationships. Interviews with respondents in my study have been transcribed verbatim and extracts are in the respondents' words.

One American mother, Norma commented that in her view, families who relocate and live in international communities are more cohesive than families who are not

geographically mobile. She reflects back to her childhood and family and peer relationships saying that she feels her peers played a more influential role in her life than her family did.

> *...and I do think...again...with the way our kids are...and in this community... and it's different...I do feel that families are more bonded here...I don't know ...maybe it's just our family. We have always been away from family... You live away from your old friends and family and stuff, so you have a tendency to stick together...you know. I think now that they're [my children] getting older ...I think that when I was a child, I had more influence from my friends than I did my family. And, I think...here...it's more of a family thing, but then again, I am a parent, so you see things different than the way you did as a kid. (Interview with parent, Norma)*

Norma, however, acknowledges the possibility that her family may be more 'bonded' than other IM families. She also acknowledges that her perceptions as a parent may differ from her past perceptions as a child. Maria, a Brazilian mother with three children talks about the closeness of her family and how she and her partner view moving.

> *...this is the...how to say...good experience that we had together, I mean...my family...because when you move a lot, umm...at least myself and my husband ...we try to put the children together and try to see the life in a different way... and so this may put us so much closer together. (Interview with parent, Maria)*

Boss (2002) notes:

> The family's perception of the event is important in explaining why, given the same event, some families manage the resulting stress whereas the event causes a crisis for other families. (Boss, 2002: 59)

For some, maintaining cohesiveness and independence becomes a delicate balance. It is not unusual for relationships amongst IM family members to be very intense. Some family members in the study described their relationships as 'too close'. This is a significant finding because it points to the need for IM families to manage their closeness or cohesiveness and be sensitive to the independence and growth needs of family members. As noted in the literature, one hazard of excessive closeness of family members is that 'enmeshment' may occur (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983: 17). As a result, families will need to balance their sometimes conflicting needs for

cohesiveness and independence. Nicola, a female student in the study spoke about how moving has affected relations in her family and in one informal conversation with me she referred to her family as 'her friends.'

> *...because you become closer to them [family] and know them better when you move around with them a lot. Because you're closer...you have more fights, but you also know each other better than families that barely see each other... because they're all running around everywhere and barely ever meet. (Interview with student, Nicola, daughter of Ingrid)*

In a separate interview, Nicola's mother spoke about the closeness her family has experienced and how problems in the family are more obvious to all family members due this closeness. Ingrid notes that her children have known when their parent's relationship was in some difficulties.

> *...thank God, we are a close family...sometimes too close (Ingrid laughs a little) It's funny that my husband and I were once separated, and so the kids know all about this...we ...not necessarily happily together, but that's important to them, too...to know when it's going all well. (Interview with parent, Ingrid, mother of Nicola)*

Another perspective on this tension between cohesiveness and independence is offered in the following extract from Susan, who talked about the close relationship she has with her adolescent daughter.

> *...I mean...she[my daughter] and I have a really good relationship...thank God ...and uh...we talk all the time. In fact, she [my daughter] says to me... 'Aw, mom... why are you around so much? You know...you know my life inside and out.' (Interview with parent, Susan)*

Helga, a Swedish mother spoke about the close relationship she has with her daughter acknowledging that she has some concerns about her daughter's relationships with friends, but is pleased about the openness in their relationship.

> *We...I talk a lot with Annika [my daughter]. Unfortunately, I think I'm her best friend...I wish it were some of her friends. (Helga laughs, but hesitates a bit) But, I think...we have a very open relationship... (Interview with parent, Helga)*

Including Helga, 19 of the 45 mothers interviewed in my study, described their family communication as open. Many of the mothers attributed this openness to their IM lifestyle. They frequently compared their communication patterns with their children

to their communication with their own parents when they were children. They concluded that their children talk with them much more than they talked with their own parents when they were children. These mothers feel that their children have less peer distraction and rely on the family more for companionship. As one American mother remarked *'...children may not branch out to make new friendships just after a move...' (Interview with parent, Lynn).*

It is important not to assume that openness may solely be influenced by the experiences of IM families. For example, Sherry, a Canadian mother attributed the openness in her communication with her daughter as a reflection of changes in her generation.

> *...And Bonnie [my daughter] is someone that I can communicate with like a friend. And I love it that this generation...that we're able to be so much more open and fluid in our communication. It's not the ''seen and not heard' kind of description that we all came from and I welcome that with open arms, so anything that comes about to contribute and exalt that, to me, is very wonderful. (Interview with parent, Sherry)*

Sherry spoke about her own life growing up during the 1960s disclosing that she experimented with drugs and sex which was not uncommon during that time period. She remarked' *...I talk to Bonnie [my daughter] about those things. My mother was very open with me and I choose to be very open....'(Interview with parent, Sherry).* It might be argued that Sherry and Bonnie merely enjoy an excellent mother-daughter relationship facilitated by Sherry's insight into her own upbringing. However, in the following extract, Lynn stresses that moving and living an IM lifestyle has forged an open relationship within her family.

> *...I think that the avenues of communication with my kids and myself are much better than with my parents and myself...not that they were bad...The fact that, you know...we've had to move and everything... counts for so many different things as a family unit for as...you know...when I was growing up...I really... I didn't tell my mom and dad very much about what was going on emotionally, it was my friends that I shared with, and it wasn't my parent. I really feel like my kids tell me a lot of what's on their minds. I'm sure it's not everything... you know...I'm not that naïve that they're telling me everything, but...but, I think that they do tell me a lot more than I ever told my folks. (Lynn)*

During an interview with a French mother, Monique, she confided that she wanted to be involved in the PSE programme with her daughter to increase the closeness and openness between herself and her daughter. At another point in the interview, she remarked that she and her daughter have different views about various topics and stated that her daughter is more liberal in her ideas and beliefs as a result of the family's international mobility. She attributed this difference, which she considered positive, to the fact that her cultural and family upbringing as being European/French has been more conservative and stated that her daughter has been exposed to more American ideas and culture when they lived in the States.

There may be some challenges associated with family cohesiveness. Over reliance and dependence on parents (as noted in Chapter 1) may result (Werkman, 1986; Pascoe, 1994). 'Delayed adolescence', a complex construct, may occur as a result of high levels of family cohesiveness and mobility during IM children's developmental years (Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 150). Useem and Cottrell (1993) surveyed approximately 700 adult 'TCKs' and claimed that they experienced a 'delayed adolescence' possibly in their early 20s or later. As noted in Chapter 1, Pollock and Van Reken (2001) define a 'TCK' as:

> … A person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 19)

The transition of adolescence can be quite challenging for IM youth. From a developmental perspective, Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 151) identify 'critical developmental tasks' that they believe adolescents need to achieve as the following: 'Establishing a personal sense of identity, Establishing and maintaining strong relationships, Developing competence in decision making, and Achieving independence'. Furthermore, they explain how and why 'delayed adolescence' may occur:

> If establishing a personal identity is a major task of adolescence, how do we do it? One critical way is by taking the cultural rules learned during our childhood

> and testing them out during adolescence. ...When the cultural rules are always changing, however, what happens to this process? This is, again, why the issues of cultural balance and mobility- and the age or ages when they occur- become very important. Often, at the very time TCKs should be testing and internalising customs and values of whatever culture they've grown up in, that whole world, its familiar culture, and their relationship to it can change overnight with one plane ride. While peers in their new (and old) community are internalising the rules of the culture and beginning to move out with budding confidence, TCKs are still trying to figure out what the rules are. They aren't free to explore their personal gifts and talents because they're still preoccupied with what is or isn't appropriate behaviour. Children who have to learn to juggle many sets of cultural rules at the same time have a different developmental experience from children growing up in one basically permanent, dominant culture that they regard as their own. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 151-152)

However, Ambert (1997) and Baumrind (1991a) argue that early separation from the family is potentially more harmful to an adolescent than later separation. Ambert (1997: 45) claims that: 'In a decade such as this one we live in, there are more dangers that confront adolescents than was the case 30 years ago'. Baumrind (1991a: 115) concurs stating 'premature emancipation is perhaps a greater threat to mature identity formation than delayed separation from family attachments.'

As for challenges in fostering independence, IM adolescents may experience delays in developing some autonomy as compared to non-IM youth. Helga talked about her daughter's (Annika) difficulty with separation from the family for brief periods when there was a school trip that involved an overnight stay.

> *...I did go last year with her to try to support her on the field trip because she has very big problems leaving home and staying away from the family. She just gets very bad agony and she feels horrible about it, so in an attempt to get her to enjoy her field trip and to stay there...I went for three days last year. She came with me home when I returned to [the town] after half the week. She just finds it very hard to sleep, she feels very insecure. (Interview with parent, Helga, mother of Annika)*

This mother is trying to help her daughter deal with short-term separation from the family by accompanying her daughter on an overnight school trip. Helga talks about why she thinks her daughter is experiencing this difficulty. Perhaps the cohesiveness

of this IM family affects Annika's ability to leave the family for short periods of time and/or Annika's personality predisposes her to be vulnerable.

> *...I think that is part of my daughter's problem not wanting to go on field trips because she cannot go home and reload her batteries in the security of her family. During the day, she's fine...when she does work and school work... and planned activities...she's fine...but when it comes to going to sleep and to being on leisure time with her friends, she feels very vulnerable. So, she doesn't manage to...she doesn't cope very well with that. (Helga)*

Norma expresses her view that her children seem more attached to her and the family in general and she attributes this to living an IM lifestyle.

> *...my kids are older [grades 6 & 8] and I am not at home everyday when they get home from school, and they are big enough to let themselves in. This morning, remarkably so...my daughter [grade] which we don't get along...my daughter says... 'you know...you really haven't been home much after school' and I said 'well, I thought you'd think that was great...you can turn on the music and eat all you want' and she was...like... 'no, I really don't like it' and you know... so, no matter how much she really doesn't like me, she does like me and she counts on me. And, I think it's all part of this community... (Interview with parent, Norma)*

Norma expresses surprise that her daughter does like her even though Norma perceives there is friction between her and her daughter. In the following extract, Norma spoke about her 14-year-old son who she feels is hesitant to leave his family to socialise with friends. She compares her son's behaviour to her and her partner's behaviour growing up. Norma believes that her family's international mobility affects her children in many ways.

> *We are actually at the age now with my son...that we are actually trying to push him out a little, like 'go on'...Guys come to the door and we are like... 'go out with them'...because when we were...I knew my husband when we were his age and we were never here...we were always out riding around...of course, times are different, but getting to the point that in society and everything...we feel* ***so close****...and I think our kids get so much from us whereas I got so much from my friends, you know, when we were younger. So...because they [my children] travel and they don't know how long they are going to be here and stuff... (Norma)*

Parenting IM Children

Parenting children growing up overseas requires parents to not only do what their parents did for them, but to go beyond that to help their IM children manage being internationally mobile.

> Parenting internationally brings with it its own set of issues, problems, and opportunities—some of which are true for parents anywhere, some of which are specific to the internationally mobile lifestyle. (McCluskey, 1994: 5).

Jalongo describes the importance of parents helping their children manage relocation as 'a critical dimension of parenting and care giving in our mobile society' (qtd. in Akram, 1995: 41). The IM parents in my study employed a variety of strategies or tactics to help their children manage relocation and the transience associated with their international mobility. For example, one mother advised her son how to 'fit in' at his new school and other mothers became involved at school, making themselves visible to promote a sense of security for their children. Drawing from the literature on family stress, Masten et al (1990: 431) note that 'across accounts, the most important protective factor is that of adults caring for children during or after major stressors'. For purposes of this thesis, 'protective factors' are defined as insulating factors that:

> ...moderate the effects of individual vulnerabilities or environmental hazards so that the adaptational trajectory is more positive than would be the case if protective factors were not operational. (Masten et al, 1990: 426)

In the following extract, one mother of Canadian nationality and Indian ethnicity explains how she has talked with her children about adjusting to change and the importance of being flexible.

> *Separation...I have always told them [my children] that only the soul...I mean...I know I am going back to meditation...I always tell them that only the soul is permanent, and we say that the most permanent thing in life is change... apart from the soul which is...you know...and if you can accept that and have this fluid attitude, then this depression will not enter when things don't work out the way you want...you know...there's so many changes happening...a certain amount of fluidity is necessary. (Interview with parent, Helena)*

It is critical that child grief be acknowledged and that there is some outlet for expression of sadness and loss. Positive parenting can help IM children overcome these challenges. Mallon (1998) offers this advice:

> Initially, it is essential to accept that children mourn and that this can inflict a great strain on them. They need our understanding and support to successfully weather the powerful waves of emotion that threaten to overwhelm them! (Mallon, 1998: 19)

Talking openly about feelings is another common strategy used by parents in the study to help their children deal with loss. 'Talking is a critical step in healing' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 318).

> *I think it helps to talk about these feelings rather than bury them and just bowl along...because I don't think these feelings go away. I mean...they weaken, they lessen, but they don't really go away. (Interview with parent, Margarite)*

Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 318) advise IM parents that the 'importance of listening' to their children 'cannot be overstated'. Positive parenting can help IM children manage the challenges associated with relocation and transience. Rigamer stresses the importance of parents recognising their '...children's individual responses to moves' so they 'know how to manage them, discipline them, encourage them' (qtd. in McCluskey, 1994: 5). A mother of Italian descent, Raphaella spoke about the difficulty her son experienced when they moved from Italy to England recently. Initially, her son attended a British school, but was allegedly bullied, so she and her spouse removed their son from the British school he was attending and enrolled him in an international school in the area. She related to me advice she gave to her son when he was about to begin attending his new school.

> *...But I said, look...I don't...want to see you if you change school again...okay? And I want to see you after one week...are you going to be the king of the school? You can't! You just wait and look...and take notice of everything...what's going on ...how are the children hanging...how are the children dressing. He was in British system with uniform...with sort of...you know...different atmosphere. Now he's here and no...no.... no...uniform...children...American children, Japanese children...behave in a different way. You are cool if you wear this, you know. So you need time to sort of look and...what is going on, and then you adjust... personality, you know. (Interview with parent, Raphaella)*

Raphaella suggests to her son that he watch and study the students in his new school. This strategy has been noted in the literature as a way to help students adjust by averting '…the pitfalls of unfamiliar interpersonal manners, and withdraw into a behavioural 'silent phase' while they observe and learn' (Pearce, 1998: 56). At this point in the interview, Raphaella described her son as 'sensitive'. Not surprisingly, it has been found that sensitive children have difficulty adjusting to an IM life, 'even those who have lived all over the world' (Pascoe, 1994: 93). Raphaella also remarked that her son is beginning to adjust to the school and stated that this school is *'the right one for him…and that's why my son said to me "mommy, I want to finish in school here" and I said: "we hope…the company…you know…we never know…".*

Another positive parenting strategy used by many mothers in the study was becoming deliberately involved in their children's school as a way of helping their children adjust to the changes. One Swedish mother talks about her involvement in her daughter's school in France to help her daughter adjust to change. This was her daughter's first school experience and was further complicated by the fact her daughter was unable to communicate fluently in English with her teachers.

> *Yes, I have three daughters…and I think I have always tried to get involved as much as possible in their schools. I was involved in different ways in different places and before we lived in England, we lived in France and I was very much involved with my middle daughter who had very big problems adjusting to school because she didn't speak English at all and she couldn't communicate with her teachers and it was her first school experience, so she was* ***terrified.*** *So, I would go in everyday to school to help chaperoning in the cafetorium or in the lunch room because they didn't have enough teachers… and it was a very scary situation for many of the little kids. It [cafetorium] was far away from their classroom and the teachers didn't stay there with them. (Helga)*

Helga commented that her daughter was not the only child who was afraid at school and that her presence helped other children as well.

> *So, my daughter was not the only one who benefited from me being there that year. And I would also try to help out quite often as a volunteer helping look after the kids in the playground. (Helga)*

An American mother of two sons who deliberately worked in school as an IM parenting tactic commented that she observed that one of her sons had a better adjustment to his new school than her other son did. She attributes one son's easier adjustment to the changes and stress to her involvement in his school when he was first enrolled as a new student.

> *...And I felt really connected with his class. I felt like... that was our first year in England...and he had a much better adjustment to the school than my other son...when I wasn't as involved in my other son's class. (Interview with parent, Sarah)*

Relocation may be particularly challenging for family members when they have no control over the decision to move and other aspects of the relocation changes (Brown and Orthner, 1990; Stokols and Schumaker, 1982; Hausman and Reed, 1991). Some parents in my study had some control over the decision of when they would relocate. This meant that they were able to give their children some input in the decision making process as well as help prepare their children for the impending move. In the following extract, Annika, a Swedish student girl spoke about the time her family was going to move to Indiana.

> *...we were going to move there...and then my dad knew he was going to be getting an offer to Indianapolis within the next few years and my mom brought up the topic of moving again...and how would you feel...about moving to Indianapolis. And I said if it was at the end of this year or next year possibly tenth grade... 'yes, I would go because I sort of feel that family...yes, I would move'. If I had a choice I would probably stay, but at the same time...I don't mind moving because it gives you a chance to be somewhere else and even start a new...just sort of a change. (Interview with student, Annika, daughter of Helga)*

I asked Annika how long had she been living in England. She responded that it was her fourth year and she added: '*It seems like forever*'. Several other students also commented that living in one place for four or five years seemed to them a very long time. Pascoe (1994) notes:

> With a move to a different country every few years, an ever-changing landscape cannot help but become ingrained into the TCKs' subconscious. They don't necessarily like all the change, but become used to it because it is their way of life and possibly the only way they know. Uprootedness is the norm. As a result of all the moving around, these children and young adults become extraordinarily flexible and adaptable which can be seen as positive. (Pascoe, 1994: 169-170)

Annika believes that if she does move, she can not only cope with the changes, but she feels that moving presents an opportunity to explore a new place as well as start anew. Her confidence and belief that she is capable of doing this serves as a 'protective factor' to aid in the adaptation process (Werner, 1990; Masten et al, 1990). Annika has had past success with moving and this mastery shapes her attitude to future moves as well as coping behaviours used (Masten et al, 1990). Pascoe (1994: 170) claims that IM children develop '… coping mechanisms to handle the constant moving so that when they arrive at a new location, an unconscious process of coping takes place'.

Annika returned to the conversation we were having about her parents talking with her about moving.

> *I said that if we were going to move after 11th grade, I would stay the last year in the dorm and finish here because I think it would be such a pain to start your last year of high school in a new school. That would be just… so, I would stay at the dorm for a year. …I think it is good because…at least [my sister] and I are aware that it might come up and if it does…so, we aren't sort of shocked and feel…I think that [being made aware of a possible move] was good. I felt really…maybe not special…but, I was glad that my mom asked me what I wanted because I think that it is important. (Annika, daughter of Helga)*

When there is the possibility of moving, Pascoe (1994: 39) advises parents that their children 'need to know their opinions and feelings count' and that allowing children to 'register their views' enables them to feel more in charge and secure.

The Complexities of 'Roots', 'Home' and a 'Sense of Belonging'

This section explores the complexities of being a 'global nomad' and how mobility and growing up with cultural diversity shape the lives of IM children. 'Global nomads' are young people who have grown up in countries outside of their 'home' country (Schaetti, 1998). 'Global Nomads' and 'TCKs' are terms often used interchangeably when referring to IM children (Langford, 1998).

There has been frequent discussion in the literature as to whether global nomads have a sense of belonging to any place and if they can identify a place they call 'home'

(Gerner et al, 1992; Killham, 1990; Pascoe, 1994). There has been concern that global nomads or TCKs will be rootless and harmed by their IM lifestyle (Langford, 1999). It has also been suggested that global nomads have 'roots' which are more relational and less geographical in nature (Pollock, 1994; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Although this may be true for many global nomads or TCKs, there were students in my study whose 'roots' were both relational and geographical. It is not possible to conclude anything definitively about the roots of students in my study other than that 'roots' vary across family members of the same families and across IM families as each family has its own unique history. Langford (1998) notes the research of Giardini (1993) and states:

> Individual identity among Global Nomads is a dynamic process and national identity is not restricted to a geographic notion. Although allegiance is normally fixed to family and friends, many feel a kinship with others who have no roots in territory but rather in travel or ideology. (Langford, 1998: 36)

The following extract illustrates how important having some geographical roots in Italy are to Raphaella's children.

> *...the family...I mean...this is the children who's travelling very much...and you know, they don't...they don't have roots...it's very important to, you know...to find out in a way...what they think about it. You know...we try to sell the house in Italy...and my children just get mad at me, they say 'don't even think about it'. It's not the house in question, it's the reference point... (Interview with parent, Raphaella)*

It has been noted that keeping a house or cottage in a location where children have grown up may serve as a 'stabilising factor of a permanent home' (Pascoe, 1994: 29). Pascoe (1994) contends that parents may not need this, but children do.
In the following narrative Raphaella's son, Anthony writes about Italy and his relatives there. He has very strong, positive feelings about his geographical roots in Italy as well as relational roots to his grandparents and wrote his thoughts down on one of the PSE assignments (see Appendix 10 – 'Country, Culture & Family').

Anthony writes:

> I think my country [Italy] is very special to me, probably because I was born there. The reasons why I love my country are many: the food, the weather, the people, the family and the style of life. I like the food better because it is more

> healthy and genuine. The weather is one of the best reasons why I love my country because we enjoy the 4 seasons. When I go back to Italy for the summer I love running in the sunshine. I enjoy all my friends and the people I know because they are friendly, smiling and open. Every time I go back to Italy I see my 2 grandmothers and my grandfather and they take me to the sea with all of them and I love to be spoiled by them. I always look forward to go to my country. (Written narrative by Anthony, son of Raphaella)

Another illustration about the complexity of 'roots' is reflected in the narrative written by a female Swedish student who writes about Swedish tradition and culture (see Appendix 10 – 'Country, Culture & Family').

> Sweden On the 13th of December, we celebrate St. Lucia. The kids in the family get up early and bake "Lusse bullar" [saffron-coloured buns]. They make their parents breakfast and celebrate, no school either. This is a celebration of light, on the dark, cold mornings of December, you get up, wear white gowns and candles on your head to scare away the dark. What I like best about Sweden, I don't know, I love everything- the national anthem, the people, the seasons- cold, snowy winters and warm summers. But most of all, it's my home. (Written narrative by Annika, daughter of Helga)

> 'Home' for a young person is a place of physical security with powerfully memorable features, scents and atmospheres. (Walker, 1998: 18)

However, 'home' can shift and become a fluid, changeable concept to IM youngsters as evidenced in the following extract. Geri, a female adolescent wrote about her years of living in Japan and how much the exposure to Japanese culture has shaped her identity as a person (see Appendix 10 – 'Country, Culture & Family').

> I'm not sure which country is my home country, so I'm going to write about the country I'm most familiar with, Japan. Japan is really special to me because I feel that a lot has influenced me, and made me what I am now. I lived there 6 years and I feel that I was really influenced by the people there, the culture, and the people. Even though I'm not Japanese, I think that I've really learned a lot from there and I don't think another country will influence me as much as Japan did. I also made life long friends there and I've had a profound experience. This is why I feel that Japan is so special to me. (Written narrative by Geri)

Although Geri expressed her inability to identify a country she would consider her home, she was, however, able to identify a 'sense of belonging' with Japanese people and their culture. It is not uncommon for TCKs to have 'roots' that are more relational than geographical.

There was also the complex question of nationality that can be puzzling for the children of IM families. One British mother spoke about her son's nationality during our interview.

> *It is a dilemma, I think...because then he is half and half ...however, he has lived here [England] most of his life...but he's lived in Brussels and Frankfurt as well and...Mmm...He's European. He's with these American connections ...However, I don't think at the end of the day he would like to say that he's American. If we bring the passport up...we have a choice. It's the British passport because I think that's because he's living here...but, Mmm...it is difficult for the children. I mean this was a bit of a quandary. What shall I...Where am I from...you know...(She laughs) (Interview with parent, Sheila)*

Monique, a mother of French ethnicity gave her perspective on the issue of nationality for her family. A critical tension is played out in the lives of the children of IM families which impacts powerfully in relation to who they are and where their 'roots' lie/where 'home' is.

> *...as I explained, because we're from...you know... different places...we don't have one origin, one nationality...so, it's always very difficult for my children to explain to...when somebody asks them... 'Where are you from?' They don't really know. (She laughs) The don't have an answer. (Interview with parent, Monique) *

At that point, I responded to Monique that earlier in the interview, she referred to herself as European and she responded that for her children the issue is not clear. She states:

> *...But, they [my children] say, well...what do I say? England? France? Born in Austria? I say, 'well it's not too dissimilar...you know...What can I say? (Monique)*

Pascoe (1994), an adult global nomad herself, suggests that some parents consider separating the idea of 'home' from 'nationality'. For example, she and her family consider their nationality to be Canadian and their 'home' to be where they live as a family.

In the extract to follow, a Danish mother with two children whose family has lived in England for eleven years spoke about their nationality and culture. This means that her son who is fourteen years old has lived in England since he was three years of age. Prior to England, Benedicte's family lived in Australia for two years, Brunei for one year, the Middle East for one year, Spain for one year and before that the family lived in Denmark. So, her son and her daughter who is sixteen years old have not lived in Denmark. Benedicte mentioned that her daughter was changing schools for her last two years of high school to experience more of the Danish culture. Her daughter will go to a boarding school in Denmark and her son is content staying in England and visiting family once a year during the holidays. She explained:

> *...we are Danish...we all feel Danish, but none of the children have ever been living in Denmark for a long time. They have never been to school in Denmark, so even that...they have strong connections with that...they really feel Danish... they feel that they want to learn more about the Danish culture and so on. That's why my daughter is going...She's really, really looking forward to it...becoming more Danish...and see more of the family...I don't think my son...he is so happy here...I mean...he has so many friends and his sports, golf...and so, I don't think... he doesn't feel like he would like to go to Denmark. He likes to go there during the holidays and visit the family, but to go there and leave this school...He doesn't want to...he wants to stay here [England]. (Interview with Benedicte; mother of Nikolas)*

Being a global nomad or TCK may be challenging because of the complexities associated with nationality and roots, however, growing up internationally mobile in culturally rich environments together shape the TCK experience. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) explain further:

> It is essential to remember that it is an *interplay* of these factors – living in both a culturally changing and highly mobile world during the *formative* years – rather than any single factor alone that leads to the evaluation of both benefits and challenges we describe as well as the personal characteristics. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 39-40)

In terms of personal characteristics, Pollock (1994) notes that TCKs have:

> ...a three-dimensional view of the world, along with good cross – cultural skills. For that reason, he believes they hold great potential for building 'cultural bridges' in a society that is becoming increasingly international. (Pollock, 1994: 172)

The parents of global nomads and TCKs have usually 'had a national upbringing' in contrast to their children who have had a multi-cultural experience during their developmental years (Pearce, 1998: 44). Murphy, an international school administrator states:

> I sometimes tell parents that they enrol their children at an international school at their peril. The children will be learning different things in a different way from anything in their parents' experience. The values they learn may not be identical to their parents' values. Children may change. They may become independent. They won't just be the same Japanese or Arab children who have learned to speak English. They will become a mix of nationalities. That is what makes it so hard for the parents. (qtd. in Langford, 1998: 39)

In the following extract, one mother speaks about the benefits her children have had growing up within an international school community.

> *...and uh, my kids have had such a more diverse education than...I went to a Catholic grade school, Catholic high school and a Catholic college. Mine [my children] have studied Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, living in Asia and learned to ahh...which I think is very valuable and wonderful... to see all these values and respect people and accept them even though you don't necessarily agree with them...and that's an important value. (Interview with parent, Sandra)*

With regard to cultural tolerance, a British mother describes her son's experience growing up in a multi-cultural environment.

> *...And then as far as the culture difference is...he's been so involved with so many, there are so many [cultures]... he doesn't consider them as differences anymore. There's this great melting pot...[he's]not noticing the differences or the colour of their [skin]...I think it's fantastic! So, umm... I mean...his best friend in Brussels was a little boy from [an African city] and still is. I mean they still keep in touch and you know...it was wonderful. And one day, I mean...he [my son]was only five when he went to the school and umm...my husband asked him one day... 'where do you suppose Babalu comes from?' And he [our son] said, 'I don't know Daddy, but it must be somewhere very hot because he's got a very nice suntan. (She laughs) And I thought that was wonderful. He had never mentioned the colour of the skin being different and he just thought he had a nice suntan. That was wonderful. (Interview with parent, Sheila)*

Pascoe (1994: 172) claims that TCKs 'often have more racial tolerance and cultural awareness than their parents'. However, several mothers in the study felt their children needed reminders about being culturally sensitive and being kind. One

Swedish mother spoke about the importance of children understanding the need to be culturally sensitive and to help others when they have moved and are the new student at school.

> *...Yeah, I think that is very important at this age...and that they discuss that [relationships, friendship] because in this school...where they [the students] come from so many different cultures. I think it's very important that they know that they can hurt somebody without really meaning it, but they have to be really aware that small things can hurt and ...you know, that they are polite and take care of each other. Also, students are coming and going and that they are aware that when you come, for example, in the middle of the term...that you really know that this is difficult and you try to help. (Interview with parent, Mareka)*

Using Resources and Building Social Support Networks

This section of the chapter explores personal, internal and external resources and the importance of social support to the IM families in my study.

> Families often call upon social support to ease the strains of restructuring. Resources and support influence the family's transition through restructuring phase by buffering the impact of pile-up [of stressors] (e.g. providing resources to resolve problems), by influencing the definition of the situation (e.g. positive appraisal, sense of mastery), and maximising the solutions available. (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983: 23)

The IM families in the study have a wealth of personal resources to draw from in dealing with relocation stress and the challenges of living an IM lifestyle. As noted earlier in this thesis, the families in my study are privileged in terms of socio-economic status. The majority of parents are college educated, many have advanced degrees. The fathers hold high-level positions in international corporations or government. The mothers in these families are strong and confident, not 'victims' as portrayed in some of the earlier research (Weissman and Paykel, 1972; Seidenberg, 1973). The parents in the study are very capable and caring mothers and fathers who are involved in their adolescent children's development. They offer their children a high level of support. Pollcok and Van Reken (2001) note that research findings suggest that the IM parent-child relationship is:

> ...The single most significant factor in determining how TCKs ultimately fare. It is here that the most basic human needs for meaningful relationship, for a true sense of belonging, and for a feeling of significance are met in early, foundational years. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 190)

Their children have more educational choices and the opportunity to attend private international schools. Armstrong-Law, an international school administrator describes 'international school students as strong, very successful and from highly motivated families' (qtd. in Langford, 1998: 39). The personal resources of IM families in the study may serve as 'protective factors' which may significantly facilitate adaptation (Masten et al, 1990).

In addition to personal resources, the families in the study demonstrated strong internal resources in the way that they united and became more flexible as a family unit. McCubbin and Patterson (1983: 17) argue that 'family cohesion and adaptability' are two of the most important strengths of families when dealing with stress. In addition to family cohesion and flexibility, I observed parent/adolescent relationships in the families who participated in the study to be of high quality. First, the students in the study hand delivered a letter to their parents at home that explained the study/PSE programme and invited families to work together. Some students in my 8th grade class decided not to take the letter home to their parents for reasons unknown. Second, there was negotiation between parents and their adolescent children in the decision to participate or not. During interviews, I asked parents and students individually to describe how the decision to participate in the study/PSE programme was made. In the majority of families, both parents and adolescent negotiated which parent(s) would work in the course with the adolescent and that fathers would work on as many of the PSE discussions as possible when they were home and not away for work related travel or other work responsibilities.

During the interviews with parents and students, it was evident that parents and their adolescent children were pleased about their decision to work together during the study/course. Many parents expressed their pleasure that their sons or daughters took the letter home indicating their interest to include their parent(s). In one family, parents told their son that they would participate in the course together against their son's wishes. This adolescent allegedly had been bullied at his last school and his

parents wanted to be closely involved with him to monitor his adjustment in his new school. The parents persuaded their son to agree to participate by telling him that parents of a friend of his at school were also planning to participate in the study/PSE programme.

From the interviews, it was obvious that IM families receive a great deal of social support from their extended families and the international school community. It was highly unusual during the interviews with the mothers if the topic of family, particularly the extended family was not mentioned. Relationships with extended family were of extreme importance to the families in the study.

In the extract to follow, Dora talks about the material advantages of living as a family overseas and the disadvantages of living far away from close family.

> *...we found with the move here...that sure...our company package...I'm sure we didn't have to pay rent and you know...the company's covering the school and everything...we like miss our family and we miss the friends we left behind. It would sure be great to have an extra million pounds that we could just fly everybody over to be with us... you know, especially the close relations...you know ...family and stuff and...it was like...money would be good for that. But, it just brought home that your relationships with other people...are important (Interview with parent, Dora)*

Dora explains that since her family has moved to England, her family has realised just how much they miss their extended family. This is her family's first overseas assignment and first experience living away from their extended family. Many parents and students in the study spoke about family tradition and family reunions.

> *...we [the family] sit down and talk about it...we like England and everything, but there are things that we miss...that we just don't do now since we're not with our extended family...I mean we do it...on a limited scale, but it's nothing like it was and the kids really miss it because I tried to make it a traditional thing ...and we don't...and that's I think one thing they associate with America...family and the close knit traditions. And they think about their country and you know... the culture and everything... (Dora)*

It is not unusual for IM families to live away from their extended families for many years or even in some cases, to permanently live in this way. Many women in my

study spoke about this issue explaining how important family is to them and how they keep a long-distance relationship going with their extended family. Many of the families in this study actively cultivate their roots maintaining their relationships with extended family members. There is a conscious decision to maintain ties with their extended families and old friends during annual or biannual visits instead of spending all of their holidays travelling to other places. Perhaps culture plays a role here in how much people value their families. In the extract to follow, Maritza provides her perspective about the importance of family:

> *...and also has to do with background because even when I said we have not been as a family...many years in Mexico...families are regarded as something very strong to society...it is still very important in society in Mexico. So you go there and you have a feeling...and every time you go...everybody...in the family comes to see us...and they make their best effort to be there. We try to see them even when they live in different cities. We go different places...they come to us and invite us everywhere...we get together and they see...the children see their cousins...they're all the same age...and they see each other as if they had just left the day before. (Interview with parent, Maritza)*

Maritza concludes by saying:

> *Even when there is time and distance...it doesn't matter much because they they are loved...and so...they...so being away from their country, they have the feeling that their family is there...that they belong to that family...and they might stay forever living in another country, but they will always...can come back. And they know their family is always open. (Maritza)*

This extract illustrates what Cobb (1976) identified as important components of social support that may apply to individual family members and to whole families. He notes that: 'emotional support', being 'cared for and loved' and 'esteem support' usually leads a person to believe that he or she is 'esteemed and valued' (Cobb, 1976: 300).

During one interview, a British mother reported that she and her Libyan spouse decided to leave Switzerland where they had lived for twelve years to relocate to England so that their son and daughter could spend time with their extended family. It was important to this family for the children to know their British aunts, uncles, and cousins.

In addition to maintaining ties to the extended family, Pascoe (1994) and Lykins (1986) suggest that families create a 'surrogate' extended family (as noted in Chapter 1) in their new community to make up for the loss of their extended family. The creation of a 'surrogate' extended family is not meant to replace the extended family, but to allow for more adult role models for the children. IM children do seek out relationships with adults who may be friends of their parents and/or teachers (Walker, 1998). It has been noted in the literature on resilient young people that close relationships with 'prosocial adults outside the family' serves as a protective factor promoting adaptation (Masten and Coatsworth, 1998: 212). The following extract by Lynn illustrates this need of children to seek out other adults when they live away from their extended family.

> *...they're used to, maybe it's because of moving so much...they're used to uhh... being open to hearing...I mean, I find with my kid's friends...they're very curious about us, you know...not like...what some of my friends back in the States are going through...where the peer groups are more...I don't know...what can you say... it's not cool to be...you know, talking with your parents...or your friends' parents. I think that the kids that move around a lot, especially in the international environment are...seem to be a little more open to talking with parents than like...the only people I have to compare with are my friends back home. (Lynn)*

Lynn remarked that she has observed that her friends and their children have a more *'them and us mentality back in the States'*.

Finally, I want to examine the role international schools play in the lives of IM families. International schools have the same major goals as non-international schools. These goals consist of assisting students to discover who they are, helping them to learn, and empowering them to meet their highest potential (Walker, 1998). However, international schools need to go beyond these goals to meet the unique needs of IM families. The international school community serves as a safe haven, a place for families to root for a few months or many years depending on the family's circumstances. Specifically, international schools meet the needs of IM families by increasing their security, decreasing some of the feelings of transience, and

encouraging a sense of belonging helping them to 'survive' and 'thrive' in an IM lifestyle. Sylvester (1998) contends that students attending international schools:

> ...learn to move between the borders of cultural perspectives with a much higher level of comfort and understanding than would be possible in a school with a narrow nationally based mission. This sophisticated world view, while generated originally from the fact of travelling widely in the world at a school-going age, is enhanced through increasingly non-formal, intimate contacts with 'foreign' students at a very personal level. (Sylvester, 1998: 188)

Langford (1998: 38) notes that international schools can become a 'life-line for the expatriate community' and provide 'community centres'. Akram (1995) notes the significance of international schools for IM families in this way:

> For these families the international school, over time and place, represents the only stable environment. For the children, the international school and its microcosm, the classroom, is their 'community'. (Akram, 1995: 40)

International school communities offer IM families a valuable type of 'network support' that usually leads families to feel that they 'belong to a network of communication and mutual obligation' (Cobb, 1976: 300). In addition, international schools have an important role in working with IM children.

> The school should be aware of the main features of the complex map of each child's cultural identity: Where is the physical home, what is the current pattern of language used in the family, who are the key adults, who are the siblings or their substitutes? What have been the defining events thus far in the child's life? (Walker, 1998: 25)

Masten et al (1990) argue that educational institutions can promote adaptation and serve as 'protective factors' for children by providing:

> ...a variety of arenas for building competence and, concomitantly, self-efficacy and self-esteem. Education itself is protective when knowledge and problem-solving skills are fostered (Masten et al, 1990: 438).

Conclusion

As evidenced in this chapter, the IM parents and children in my study were not 'passive' agents moved about the globe. Instead, the IM parents in the study actively employed strategies to help their children manage relocation and transience. The families in my study told of strategies which they deliberately employed in order to

ease the transition. Mothers actively engaged in helping their child ease into new schools. At the same time, the IM families in my study recognised the role that their extended families played in maintaining a sense of coherence, stability and belonging.

Although the IM families acknowledged the 'costs' of being IM (in Chapter 4), critically they viewed their international mobility as an opportunity for growth, albeit very challenging at times.

CHAPTER 6

THE NATURE OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Introduction

Chapter 5 began a consideration of the role of international schools in the lives of IM families and in particular, the ways in which IM families use them to help manage transience. Chapters 6 and 7 both explore the interface between IM families and their schools. Chapter 6 looks at this interface in general terms and Chapter 7 focuses on the PSE intervention as a concrete example of the interface. This chapter focuses on aspects of family involvement in depth. It explains the scope, and some of the limitations and problems, of family involvement in the life of the school and more generally in the education of children. In so doing, it probes the question of how far families and schools can form a 'shared community' in practice.

It is important to understand that international mobility and the management of transience may significantly influence IM family involvement in education. Family involvement in education is a way for parents to monitor and participate in their child's development as well as a strategy or tactic for managing relocation and transience.

All of the parents in the study were involved in their children's development of which education was an integral part. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) note:

> In terms of preparing their children for life, they [parents] themselves are the primary educators. Schools can't substitute for the home in building values, developing healthy attitudes, and motivating children in positive directions. (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 218)

In contrast, the involvement of IM parents may differ from the involvement of non-IM parents in terms of how and why IM parents are involved in their children's education. As was illustrated in the previous chapter relocation stress and parenting internationally play a major role in shaping the ways IM parents are involved and their rationale for involvement in their children's education.

In what follows, major barriers to family involvement in education are explored. For example, schools designated as 'international' may not meet the needs of all IM parents of diverse cultures. Henry (1996: 94) notes: '...even if diversity and cultural pluralism is evident in the school, schools can still effectively be alienating places for many students and parents whose cultures are different from the one celebrated in the school'.

The extracts selected for this chapter are a sub-set of the total data set and were drawn from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with parents from Phase 1 and 2 of the study and students from Phase 2 (see Table 11). Extracts from all 9 parents who participated in Phase 1 of the study are included in the chapter because the focus of the interviews was parent involvement in children's education and home – school relations generally. One of the fathers and two of the mothers interviewed were also teachers employed at the school. I invited them to participate in order to obtain their perspective as parents and teachers as this could prove valuable because of their ability to view the topic from two vantage points. In addition, extracts from the parent interviews with fathers were selected to provide a 'voice' from fathers who have been largely excluded in past literature (Stacey, 1991; Gelles, 1995; Dienhart, 1998). Extracts from parents and students from Phase 2 were selected to obtain their input and perspectives about family involvement in education as they worked together during the PSE programme.

Table 11.

Respondents in Chapter 6

Name (Pseudo-nym)	Parent (P) or Student (S)	*Birth Country/ Country of Origin	Nationality	Other Details
Benedicte *	P	Denmark	Danish	2 children, Mother of Nikolas
Dora	P	US	American	4 children
Sarah **	P	US	American	2 children
Maureen **	P	US	American	4 children
Helga **	P	Sweden	Swedish	3 children, Mother of Annika
Julie	P	Denmark	Danish	3 children, Partner of Karl (in Chap. 7)
Rachel **	P	South Africa	South African	2 children
Susan	P	US	American	3 children
Jane **	P	Canada	French Canadian	2 children
Ingrid	P	Belgium	Belgian	3 children
Frank **	P	The Netherlands	Dutch	2 children
Raphaella	P	Italy	Italian	2 children
Jessica	P	Canada	Canadian	2 children, Partner of Greg
Denise **	P	US	American	2 children
Greg	P	Canada	French Canadian	Partner of Jessica
Patrick	P	US	American	3 children, Partner of Sandra (in Chap. 5)
Wallace **	P	US	American	2 children
Monique	P	France	French	3 children
Nikolas	S	*	Danish	Son of Benedicte
Annika	S	*	Swedish	Daughter of Helga
Dennis	S	*	*	Son of Patrick and Sandra (in Chap. 5)

* (Birth Country/Country of Origin or Nationality not identified)

** (Parents interviewed in Phase 1 and 2 of study)

Based on systematic coding of the data, the following key themes emerged:

- Parenting and Beliefs About Family Involvement
- Factors Influencing the Types and Process of Family Involvement
- Disadvantages of Family Involvement

- Barriers to Family Involvement
- Students' Views About Family Involvement: Rules of Engagement.

Within these themes, important questions are considered. For example, what is involvement? Does communicating interest and support qualify as involvement? Do gender differences influence the involvement of parents in their children's education? Why are some IM parents uncomfortable being involved in their children's education 'at school'? What are the major disadvantages of and barriers to family involvement in education? How do students in the study view family involvement?

Parenting and Beliefs About Family Involvement

This first section explores parenting practices and beliefs about family involvement in education. When exploring involvement of parents in their children's education, it is important to examine the factors that influence parents to be involved in their children's education in the first place. Three major factors have been identified which may lead to family involvement (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997; Eccles and Harold, 1993). First, parents perceive that their involvement in their child's education is an integral part of their role and function as parents. Second, parents perceive a 'sense of efficacy' in their ability to help their child. It is important to state that having 'a sense of efficacy' may overlap other themes explored in this chapter. Third, parents perceive that opportunities for involvement exist. Teachers may play a critical role in encouraging and recruiting parents to be involved or discouraging involvement from occurring at all (Epstein, 1987; Henry, 1996).

Parents usually had more than one reason for being involved in their children's education. Often their choice of the type of involvement and the rationale for being involved were based upon some combination of beliefs about their perceived needs and the needs of their children. Four major beliefs emerged from the interviews with parents. First, parents believed that involvement in their children's education helped them become better parents. Second, parents expressed the need to be involved with their children's education pertaining to moral, religious and spiritual matters. Third,

parents perceived the need to help their children feel secure at school and to encourage their children to have a positive attitude about school and learning. Last, parents believed that establishing a rapport with their child's teachers would benefit their child.

Before exploring the beliefs of parents, it is important to consider the socio-economic status of parents in the study and how socio-economic backgrounds may affect family involvement in children's education. For example, there may be similarities in the skills and the availability of resources of IM parents and non-IM parents who share similar socio-economic backgrounds that affect their involvement in their children's education. Lareau (1989) and Coleman (1988) note the influence of social class upon parental involvement and Ambert (1997) concurs:

> Parents' social class position equips them with an unequal set of resources that can impact differentially on children's school performance and especially on parents' ability to be involved in their children's education. (Ambert, 1997: 114)

It has been claimed (Lareau, 1989; Ambert, 1997) that parents from underprivileged backgrounds usually value education as much as advantaged parents. However, parents from privileged backgrounds may be more likely to view school and home as interdependent in contrast to parents of disadvantaged backgrounds who may be more inclined to view school and home as separate domains (Lareau, 1989; Ambert, 1997). These factors may influence the involvement of parents in their children's education. As noted earlier in this thesis, the IM parents in my study come from middle to upper middle socio-economic backgrounds and consequently their children may experience the benefits of the 'human capital' and 'financial capital' that they bring to their families (Coleman, 1988: 114-115). It is important to consider that the privileged parents in my study may seek involvement in their children's education as a function of their parenting role viewing home and school as interdependent. It is equally important, however, not to assume this to be the case for all of the IM parents in the study. In my study, some cultural factors and potential language barriers affected the involvement of some IM non-American parents in their children's education 'at

school' and their comfort level at doing so. These IM non-American parents had a national upbringing in various European countries where the domains of school and home were separate. This issue is explored further in a later section.

In relation to the first belief, all of the parents interviewed in my study acknowledged that being involved in their children's education helped them understand their children better or helped them become better parents. An American mother, Sarah expresses her pleasure at being involved and explains how her involvement affects the way she parents her children.

> *Yeah, and again it's [being involved in schools]really fun. It's nice to get to know the other kids. You feel like somehow you get to know your own child better seeing what kind of kids they're involved with and kind of... how their abilities and disabilities or whatever match with other students in the class. Somehow to me...it is very helpful in understanding my own child. Yeah, so it helped me to know...it helped me be a better parent...I think...to know some of the things that they do, all other kids do...you know...and not to be so hard on them in those areas, but then in others...to maybe encourage growth. ...just be seeing there are other kids their age that can really handle certain situations better than my kids. It helps you to see how they fit, which is helpful. (Interview with parent, Sarah)*

It is important to note that Sarah sought to not only work with her children, but also to get to know the other children her children associate with as a way of gauging the growth and development of her children. Helga had similar views about this.

> *...And I find it easier also to understand how my children react in periods...when they have problems...when I know more of the kids at school...I find it easier to follow the development of kids when I see how other kids react in different situations. (Interview with parent, Helga)*

A Dutch father, Frank feels that it is important to stay connected to his children and the generation they are growing up in, as a way to have some understanding about what his children face in their lives.

> *...the advantage for me has been...is that it allows you to have more communication with your kids and to stay in touch with their...with that generation. Although, I think as parents, we are relatively young...there isn't too big an age gap...of course, there is an age gap, but it isn't too big.. It could be a lot more. So, I think there's a reasonable degree of flexibility on our [parents] side still to understand what they're dealing with...and what*

> *they're thinking about...as to maybe somebody who's ten or fifteen years older which could be possible. So, that was a benefit...(Interview with parent, Frank)*

Helga also expressed her desire to be connected to her children's generation.

> *...so, I've participated in some of the rehearsals [drama productions], but mostly I've been responsible for the makeup the kids are wearing which is a wonderful thing because I get to know lots of kids in school and I like that. I like to be...I like to know the kids. I like to know who they are. I like to see the world where my kids are moving around. (Helga)*

An American mother, Denise reflected upon how she was parented as a child and remarked that her experience as a child and the relationship she had with her mother shaped how she parents her children. She has chosen to be more involved in her son and daughter's lives than her mother was involved in her life.

> *...I came from a family of four, I was the oldest...my mother...I was seven before we had my brother and then she had boom, boom, boom...so, she wasn't involved with me too much, so it wasn't her fault...it was just the way life is. So, I always thought 'ok...I'm just going to make sure that I'm around' ... She didn't drive either. So, to me, it is important to be with my kids because I always felt like I was always on the outside and I wanted my kids to feel that they could come to me and know me and know that I was around...that's the reason I've really been involved...not so much because I need to be here so to let everyone know I'm here (Denise laughs). I just like to be here because I like the kids to know that they can depend on me. (Interview with parent, Denise)*

Denise makes a special point of wanting her children to know her and not wanting her children to feel 'on the outside' as she did as a child. At this point in the interview, Denise raised the topic of moving and the fact that many of the mothers of children at the school do not work in England because they do not have work permits. She mentioned that parents are worried about their children, having uprooted them from their homes and schools. Consequently, many IM mothers are involved in their children's education in an effort to monitor and assist in their child's adjustment.

As his children advance through the grades to high school, Frank believes that he can make a contribution to his children's education, so perhaps he feels the 'sense of

efficacy' noted by Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997; Eccles and Harold, 1993. Frank explains his involvement as an advisor to his children guiding them in how to make important decisions for their future. He perceives there is a need to help his children.

> *Anyways...so then we are moving forward, so when they get to high school level, things become more important...I found myself involved in talking to them about the kind of topics that they should try to emphasise...as you think about your program and you have to start making choices...that's where you try to help them out... (Frank)*

Four out of nine fathers interviewed during my study reported that being involved in their child's education was, in part, determined by how interesting, important or controversial the topic was to them. The fathers in the study also tended to be more actively involved in their child's education during the teenage years. In their research, Larson and Richards (1994) claim that fathers' involvement with their adolescents seemed more optional than that of mothers, with fathers tending to stop being involved if they felt like doing so. I question this claim because father involvement is very complex. For example, experiencing 'a sense of efficacy' may influence the involvement of parents regardless of gender (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997; Eccles and Harold, 1993). The type of involvement parents of either gender seek very often is based upon their interest and a sense that they have something to contribute as well as time and opportunity.

During the interviews, it was rare when parents did not express their enjoyment in working directly with their children and their pleasure in being able to make a difference for children. Frank commented about his success in being able to influence his children.

> *...I actually found that they do listen and are affected by the things you tell them. I found that somewhat pleasing as well because you realise that you're not just talking to somebody who's going to listen, but do their own thing anyways. You can make an impression in the way that they think or feel about the choices they make. (Interview with parent, Frank)*

Another major belief, which was evident in the data, was a need expressed by many parents to be involved in their children's education that pertained to controversial and sensitive topics and education of a religious or spiritual nature. An American father, Patrick explained the reason he wanted to be involved in the PSE programme/study and how he chose specific assignment topics to discuss with his son. In Patrick's family, the whole family (parents and three adolescent sons) were involved in the PSE programme discussions at home.

> *...It [my involvement] depended on the sheet [PSE assignment] and whether I was interested in it [topic] or not...whether I thought they [topics] were controversial subjects that had a religious implication to them...was really one of the things I got involved with...because here was a... as far as I knew a health class that was purely approached from non-religious, non-spiritual sense. So, I looked at all [PSE assignments] of them as it related to that and then decided which ones I wanted to participate in...(Interview with parent, Patrick)*

Patrick believes strongly that it is the responsibility of parents to prepare their children in the areas of religion and spirituality.

> *...I think that's important...education is...most parents will have some type of spiritual background, however small. And we have to...they should get that from home...It's the whole spirituality side of it...it's the human relationship side of it...which is spiritual...someone's got to start them off right. (Patrick)*

In the extract to follow, a single mother of Canadian nationality and a teacher at the school where the study took place spoke about the need for school and home to work more closely together about education affecting children's health and welfare.

> *...I feel that these areas which are of profound importance to children and their personal safety, their lives in general today...there has to be more of a focus and consensus between home and school on all of these issues. (Interview with parent, Jane)*

Jane explained further:

> *...I think whatever was expected or required to do as a parent...and it was viewed as being of value, I would like to be involved...to find the time...this is the time available for this kind of school support. So, it would help us being parents...actually we would feel a little more productive or that we are involved in what goes on in the school and the curriculum decision making*

> *especially with attitudes and values...and morality issues... (Interview with parent, Jane)*

There is further in depth discussion of these issues in Chapter 7.

A third belief involved child security and the importance of learning in school. There were mothers who chose to be involved 'at school' to help their children feel secure. Helga used her physical presence 'at school' (as noted in Chapters 4 and 5) as a way of managing relocation, promoting adaptation to change for her family, and communicating to her children that school is important. Baker (1997) found that parents used involvement (as noted in Chapter 2) to communicate that school and learning are a very important part of life.

> *...I think it [being involved in children's school] gives a good base for their... if they feel secure at school...and they like the school and they realise that I like the school...it's something positive. And, so far my kids are all very pleased ...they like the school...they like to go to school. And I think that if children have a positive attitude towards the school and towards learning and towards doing things at school, I think they will learn a lot. (Helga)*

Sarah spoke about her rationale for being involved 'at school' as a strategy in helping understand her children better. She was also involved in her children's education to help one of her sons adjust to his school when the family first moved to England. On the issue of adjusting to relocation, Simon, Cook, and Fritz (1990) claim that children will usually adjust well and have a positive attitude if their mother does.

The fourth major belief of parents concerned the need to build a rapport with their child's teachers. Ten mothers spoke about the importance of establishing a relationship with their child's teachers. A South African mother, Rachel argues that teachers will understand her child better if they get to know her and the child's family background.

> *...The advantages, I think...are that if the school staff gets to know you as a person ...they also have a clearer picture of your child and the environment they come from. (Interview with parent, Rachel)*

Rachel believes that her involvement demonstrates to the school staff that she is an advocate of the school and this, in turn, will benefit her children. This supports earlier findings by Baker (1997) who found that parents viewed their involvement as a way of promoting co-operation and open communication with the school which they believed would be beneficial to their children.

> *And I think they [school staff] see your commitment and dedication and if they get to like you psychologically...you know...or subconsciously, they're going to deal with your child on a more pleasant basis. They're going to have a better feeling about the child...it's just human instinct or nature to do that. So, it does help. You see... a rapport, you know...you [teacher] see where [Sean] gets that outlook from because I [teacher] know his mom... And then I think if there are any problems with the children, the staff are more comfortable in coming to you. So, I think it's a great advantage. (Interview with parent, Rachel)*

Helga has similar views. She explained that if there is a problem with her children, the teachers and school administration are less likely to perceive her as a parent who overreacts to situations if they get to know her beforehand.

> *...I always find it easier to understand and to be able to solve problems that have to do with myself and my kids if I know the teachers a little bit or if they would know who I am. I find it easier to communicate if the teachers or the principals or whoever I have to deal with...in different matters...if they know...if I'm familiar ...if they've seen my face...if they know that I'm not an hysterical person that makes a lot of noise for nothing. (Helga)*

Wolfendale (1992: 8) points out that 'parents often have vital information and insights concerning their children' and claims that many schools have not taken advantage of this.

In the case of IM children, it may be critical that international schools communicate closely with IM parents to assist students in managing international mobility and transience.

Factors Influencing the Types and Process of Family Involvement

The types and process of family-school involvement are affected by many factors that may include the age and gender of the child and parents, roles of parents, employment status of parents, geographic mobility of family, and availability of opportunities for

involvement. Parents in this study reported all types of involvement in their children's education 'at school' and/or 'at home'. As noted in the literature (Becker and Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1991) and in the findings of this study, the most frequently reported activity of parents was helping their children and other children with reading. Not surprisingly, it has been noted that the involvement of parents in reading schemes for children have been actively promoted by teachers and school administration (Becker and Epstein, 1982). In addition to involvement in reading schemes, approximately 75 per cent of mothers in the study reported that they had served as 'room mothers' to assist the teacher with a particular section/grade of students. Parents also reported family involvement in science and social studies projects for school fairs. Attendance at parent/teacher conferences and performance events of their children was also common.

I found that parents planned their involvement in their children's education and their involvement was co-ordinated and purposeful. It is not unusual for IM mothers in the study to be very involved in their children's education. The opposite may be true for IM fathers who spend large amounts of time away from home carrying out their job responsibilities. In an earlier section, Frank spoke about his involvement in his children's education as a benefit that helped balance his life, so that work and other aspects of his personal life do not overly dominate his life.

> *...another benefit would be that it is part of the diversification that you as a parent have in your life...it isn't all work or it isn't all dealing with home situations or with situations with your partner. (Interview with parent, Frank)*

A Canadian father, Greg had similar views explaining how he tried to balance his family life and work life.

> *...I would try and get to things that were important for the kids...like [my son] was in some of the speech competitions which blew me away that he would have the guts to get up there and actually do that. So, I didn't take stock in his basic nature...he's pretty shy in a lot of other areas, so I didn't expect...all of a sudden ... he's in the finals... So, I would arrange my schedule so I could be there for... kind of...important events in their [my children's] lives...to let them know that I am interested... (Interview with parent, Greg)*

Greg mentioned that at his son's previous school in Canada, he and his partner, who was a teacher at the school, attended parent/teacher conferences together. Greg described a strategy he and his partner used during parent/teacher conferences.

> *...So, I would make myself available to go on interviews, she [my partner] would go too, but she wanted me to be there to get maybe a more objective opinion of what was being said and ask some of the questions from more of an outsider's perspective...So, between the two of us, my wife was at the school ...then I was available for various support and things. You kind of...covered things that way. (Greg)*

These extracts raise important issues. It seems that involvement may include a variety of activities 'at home' and 'at school' and may include communicating and showing an interest.

In the extracts to follow, a Danish student, Nikolas describes how school involvement is managed in his family.

As noted in the literature and the findings in Chapter 4, parents, especially the fathers in the study experience a 'time bind' due to work responsibilities that limits the time they can spend with their families (Hochschild, 1997).

> *...My mom tries to be involved in it [school]...you know...she tries to come as much as she can...and she wants to level it [her involvement] out between how much she helps my sisters and me, but now my sisters want her help so much so...but, my dad sort of...I don't feel bad about this because he feels uncomfortable about it [school involvement]...so, but he sort of doesn't know what is going on in school and doesn't really have time to do it. It's a bit weird because he is the one paying the bill for the school, but he doesn't really know what goes on. He knows it's a good school, but not really how it all comes together...when we actually learn. Well, my mom just tries to help as much as she can and she wants to help. (Interview with student, Nikolas)*

Nikolas gives his perspective on his father's involvement. He makes an important point arguing that it is acceptable if a parent is not involved 'at school' as long as that parent is supportive and interested in his children's education and communicates this to the children. This finding is consistent with the literature as suggested by Keith and

Lichtman (1994) who argue that communicating interest and support by parents qualifies as parent involvement.

> *...I think the key thing is that the dad...be supportive and interested. The worse thing you can do is say 'I'm not involved and I don't want to be involved...and you just sort it out'. As long as there is some support or positive input then I don't really think there is ever going to be a problem. ...And so, if you are aware and supportive and interested, then the balance is there. (Nikolas)*

Nikolas's father was involved in the PSE programme 'at home' and in fact, the whole family participated in the PSE programme and study. Besides Nikolas's father, there were other parents who felt uncomfortable about some types of involvement 'at school' and this issue is addressed in a later section.

To Nikolas, interest and support communicate caring, which he feels is critical.

> *In my opinion, the worst thing is that the dad comes home from work and the mom comes home from work or being out shopping or doing grocery shopping or whatever...and then the kids come home from school and no one says 'How was it?' or 'Did you have fun?' or 'Did you learn anything or 'How is the project going?' And you just sit there going...in front of the TV and there is no communication. Just as long as...I think that is the worst thing that can happen. No one is caring what happens...(Nikolas)*

Noller et al (2001) writes:

> The family remains an important influence...and adolescents seem to need 'the secure base' of a constructive and healthy relationship with their parents. (Noller et al., 2001: 79)

Nikolas's mother, Benedicte spoke about her husband's non-involvement 'at school'. Father absence due to job demands (as noted in Chapters 1 and 4) can lead to increased involvement of mothers in the everyday lives of their children in IM families (Werkman et al., 1982). It is common in IM families for IM mothers to update their partners about the progress of the children.

> *...he's [my husband] very busy...travels a lot, you know...so, I've been the one who has taken care of the homework and assignments...I must say...he doesn't participate. (Benedicte laughs) He doesn't even come to most of the things for the parents at the school. It's always me on my own because he says 'oh, you better do it.' So, I've been the one who was here [school]*

> *...then told him what happened when I came back. Yah, well sometimes, it is that way...it's that way for a lot of families, especially families here [international school community] with the travel and the jobs, stuff like that. (Interview with parent, Benedicte)*

It is common for IM fathers to have to decide between being involved in their children's education or meet a work responsibility. Frank spoke about what he views as an obstacle to involvement for him.

> *...it [involvement] takes you away from work. But, that's not a real disadvantage. An obstacle would be that very often you have to make the choice between going to work and doing something for school and you have to make the choice to go to work...that's what I've felt...(Interview with parent, Frank)*

Frank identified an area in which fathers could make an impact their child's education. He uses the international corporation he works for as an example illustrating a contribution that could benefit children.

> *...I think the contribution that parents and especially dads can make is to give kids an idea of the work environment that the parents are in. So, I think...on my side, what could I do? You could show them the place...you could show them the corporation...other activities that are going on. In this particular place [Frank's corporation] we have a lot of different plans across the country and across Europe they could see. (Interview with parent, Frank)*

Earlier in the chapter, Sarah spoke about her involvement in her son's education. Whilst living in England, Sarah taught phonics to small groups of students in the primary grades at the international school her sons attended. Teachers recruited Sarah because they were aware that she was a teacher and had special skills in teaching young children phonics and how to read. It is important to note that teachers in international school communities are aware that there is a large pool of IM mothers who are usually available to help in the educational process. Some teachers take advantage of this situation and perhaps these teachers are the 'teacher leaders' noted by Epstein (1987). Epstein found that 'teacher leaders' had more expertise than teachers who did not encourage family involvement.

During the interviews, I asked parents to talk about any involvement they have had with their child's education. Frank, with two adolescent children in secondary school, described his involvement as a process that was influenced by the child's age. Frank also commented that involvement 'at school' is difficult due to job responsibilities.

> *...the process as far as I am concerned has changed over time...in a sense... in the beginning, especially as a father, you at the lower level schools...it's very difficult to be involved because it requires going to school physically... that is very difficult to do and also I think your contribution is doubtful...apart from showing an interest in what kids do... (Interview with parent, Frank)*

Frank explains that he did not know what he could offer young children.

> *...what is it you can do? Are you going to stand up in front of the class...are you going to tell a six or seven year old kid about the job you do? There's just too much of a gap...at that point in time... (Interview with parent, Frank)*

This extract raises important questions. Is the age gap between fathers and young children a barrier to involvement in their children's education? Do fathers feel a lack of efficacy in contributing to their child's education when their children are young with the exception of providing support at home as Frank mentioned?

Earlier, Frank noted that the age of the child was a significant factor that influenced his involvement in his children's education. It is documented in the literature (Epstein, 1986, 1987, 1992; Dauber and Epstein, 1993) and reflected in the findings of this study that as children leave primary or elementary school, there is usually a decline in the involvement of parents 'at school'. Furthermore, there is usually a decrease in the involvement of parents 'at home' with the exception of some IM fathers who reported more involvement with their children in secondary school. As children and their parents age, parents prepare for the time when their children are less dependent on them and for setting new priorities for themselves as parents. A South African mother, Rachel remarked that she has decreased her involvement now that her children are older and she is taking more time for herself to do things she would like to

do. Rachel tries to balance meeting her own individual needs with continuing some level of support for her children.

> *...This year my energies are actually pointed in a different direction. I'm starting to do a little more for myself and I'm working, so...but, hopefully I'm still here for them [my children]...when they want me...you know...I come to watch the basketball games after school. (Interview with parent, Rachel)*

An American father, Wallace talked about the reason he thinks involvement decreases as children get older. He states:

> *...as the students get older...they're more independent of their parents... and the parents think... 'well, it's them now...sink or swim...they've got to paddle their own canoe'. (Interview with parent, Wallace)*

Helga gave her thoughts about this:

> *...it's part of life that you're more involved physically at the spot when the kids are little and that you sort of try to let go when they're bigger...they're big enough...So, there are natural reasons why there is higher grade of involvement in the lower school and that's ok...I think that's fine. I think that's the way it should be. (Interview with parent, Helga)* \

Denise raised the issue of child/parent separation and the distress this may bring to families. Researchers note that parent-child relations may be challenging and very difficult for families during adolescence (Larson and Richards, 1994; Noller et al, 2001).

> *...as they get older, they want to push the parents away and unfortunately I don't think parents know how to handle that very well...we either become very hurt because we think 'wait a minute, we've been with you all the time...why?'...and we know we have to have this separation, but it's very hard to handle, it's hard for a parent to handle being pushed away and at the same time...some children handle it...well, they say 'Ok, I want to push my parents way' but, other ones are only pushing their parents away because their peers are pushing their parents away. They really do still want their parent there, but it's not cool. (Interview with parent, Denise)*

Denise refers to the transition period when it is claimed adolescents separate from their parents, become more involved and influenced by their peers, and establish their own identities. This process, often referred to as 'separation and individuation' describes when adolescents 'separate emotionally from their primary caretakers' (Hausman and

Reed, 1991: 252). During the interviews with parents, there was uncertainty as to when was the appropriate age for 'separation' to occur in IM families.

> *The fact of the matter is that they [children] need their parents...they just don't realise how much they need their parents. And I think that a lot of parents decide about eighth grade that they need to let them[their children] be too independent...be independent and because of that...I think we make mistakes. I think that...not that I've really...I still have a very good relationship with [my son, age 17 years old], but I'm very in tune to kids...I think I am... luckily. But, boy...it scares me to think how many kids are on their own after eighth grade and their parents are so busy that they forget how important their time is with their kids.....I don't know how you might be able to help re-educate that the kids really do need their parents. (Interview with parent, Denise)*

This extract raises important questions. Do young adolescents need their parents? Do IM families struggle more than non-IM families during the period of separation? Does the cohesiveness often described by IM families make it difficult for IM adolescents to begin the process of separation and for IM parents to begin to let go and encourage their adolescent children to become more independent?

Researchers argue that parents need to stay involved in their children's lives because of the many choices, opportunities as well as hazards children have growing up today (Comer, 1986; Baumrind, 1991a; Ambert, 1997).

> Given the complexity of the modern world, today's students need more adult help than children did in the past. Programs that involve parents in the schools can play a major role in creating a desirable context for teaching and learning. (Comer, 1986: 442)

There is another implication for IM families to consider. Henry (1996: 89) claims that '...middle schoolers still need parental support and attention, particularly if the home culture is different from the school'.

A Canadian mother of French ethnicity, Jessica spoke about her feelings of being involved in her son's PSE programme just prior to her son starting high school. She mentions that teachers are less likely to encourage parents to be involved in their child's education as they progress to high school grades. A decrease in teacher request

for parents to be involved in their child's education has been noted in the literature (Henry, 1996; Epstein, 1987).

> *This is a wonderful way and this is one of our last times to actually have input into our kids...because once they get into high school...it is very hard. Even with the teachers...they don't want you...this kid has to do it for themselves. It's true the kid does have to do it for himself or herself. So, this is the last chance you have as parents. (Interview with parent, Jessica)*

There is a sense of urgency here. There is a feeling that time is running out for parents to have 'input' into their children's lives.

> *I think everything we do in our kid's lives is a process and it was meaningful. I felt like I had something to say to him and I had time to bond with him. Anything that I can do with him is wonderful...even if the school...it's an opening. (Interview with parent, Jessica)*

Disadvantages of Family Involvement

This section explores some of the disadvantages of family involvement in education. Parents identified various disadvantages that include: Over involvement of parents 'at school', school dependence on parent involvement, inappropriate use of parents, burn out of parents, changes in the relationship between teacher and students, a lack of balance in the lives of women and a strain on children. As noted by Eccles and Harold (1993), parents in the study identified time pressures as a disadvantage or in some cases, a barrier to involvement.

Parents raised issues concerning what they experienced or have observed about the involvement of parents in schools. One issue stemmed from how much, how and when parents are involved in their children's education. Denise claimed that there was too much parent involvement at the international school her children attend, but feels this problem is an issue at many schools. Denise and her family have lived in England for two time periods, three years and five years during which her children attended the same international school. Consequently, she has observed the involvement of parents in this international school over an eight-year period. Denise expresses her belief that inappropriate parent involvement can affect teacher/student relationships negatively.

> *...I think...the only thing that I feel about it is that there is a limitation that I think the school needs to look at...I think that the school here [international school]...and most schools...but, particularly here...I think they depend very highly on parent participation, but I think that some-times things happen where ...and I think that even the Principal feels this way...is that the school needs to take better control of some situations...the parents can tend to get over zealous ... (Denise quickly throws her arms in the air)*

Denise feels strongly that schools need to examine the role of teachers and parents in the education of children and identify areas where the teachers should play a major role and the parents a less prominent position.

> *...and I think that is something you might want to take a look at...as a group of teachers...as a group of administrators now...you might want to sit back and think...we... there are some things that we need to be involved in and that the parents need to take a sideline because this is where we [teachers]come in ...sometimes with parent involvement...you lose the teacher (Denise)*

Denise contends that involvement of parents has had some negative effects on the teacher/student relationship.

> *...I think there's a lack of communication between the children and the teachers ... maybe that's because the parents have been so involved. I'm serious...I really think that that is a struggle at this school...I think the teachers have let the parents take over a lot, that they're comfortable with that...and I think a lot of...they [teachers] miss the one-to-one with the kids... and I think school dances...I think the teachers are tired, personally...I think that they put a lot of time in...because chaperones...you know...they just look at us and say 'ok, you're here, good job thank God you're here' (Denise laughs)*

Furthermore, Denise claims that burnout is a problem for some parents and argues that schools need to do more to prevent this problem.

> *...the parents here are sometimes so involved that it keeps...it puts the teachers on the outside and it doesn't keep the relationship with the kids and the teachers ...they lose track of each other. ...There has to be a way to figure how to use the parents in special ways to help you [the teachers] as well as the students without burning us [parents] out. (Denise)*

A Belgian mother, Ingrid who had similar views as Denise spoke about her involvement in her children's school in the United States.

> *...like in America...they are so much involvement...we did things like cooking for Thanksgiving and Christmas. I was class mother and we got together with the other class mother who actually ended up living here, too, but it was before I came over. That one year...I was Santa and she was Mrs. Claus...but, then you get to a point where you say, well now...burned out a bit...(Interview with parent, Ingrid)*

Burn out of parents (regardless of mobility status) has been noted in the literature as a potential and actual problem for parents involved in their children's education (Henry, 1996).

Helga points out potential problems or disadvantages when parents are so involved in their children's education that time for themselves is not planned. She describes how she avoids this problem in her family.

> *...Well, I suppose there could be a disadvantage if that's the main thing in your life...if that's the thing you're sticking your life on...is trying to live through your children and only...and getting so much involved in school that you don't have any life or interests of your own. I think that is...that could be dangerous. So, I try very much to limit to certain projects...my involvement in school. That's the reason that I have not been involved as...sort of PTO officer...because going to meetings all the time at school and being involved in these things...I find it takes too much time and it doesn't leave space for me to have a life of my own outside the school. (Interview with parent, Helga)*

Helga also remarked (as noted in Chapter 4) that IM mothers who relocate frequently with their families are at a higher risk of spending too much time at school.

> *...And I think it's very...very important to create a space and things that are just your own that doesn't involve the family. So, I'm against too much involvement in school as being your only lifeline...sort of...out in society. I think that's bad because that [too much involvement in school] will put a heavy burden on your kids, too. (Interview with parent, Helga)*

Helga speaks to the problem for IM women who may have less life of their own and says: *'What about when they [your children] grow up and what about when they move...' She* also remarks that over involvement may have negative effects on the children. The final section of the chapter explores child embarrassment as a result of some types of parent involvement.

Barriers to Family Involvement

Lykins (1986) notes that parents are more involved in their children's education at international schools and in some countries, like the United States where the first Parent/ Teacher Organisation (PTO) was established (Hiatt, 1994; Gareau and Sawatzky, 1995). However, despite claims of increased involvement of parents at American dominated international schools, some non-American IM parents, particularly mothers may feel excluded due to language barriers and/or cultural differences dependent upon the school's cultural identity and orientation.

One of the barriers to family involvement with the school in the study was parent discomfort at being over involved 'at school'. A major finding was that some non-American, IM parents from various countries were not comfortable with involvement 'at school'. These parents were not accustomed to being involved 'at school' and they explained that school and home were separate domains in their home countries when they were educated. For example, parents from Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Italy, and France were not used to being involved in their children's education 'at school'. However, these parents were involved in their children's education directly 'at home' and indirectly through their parenting practices.

Historically, the involvement of parents 'at school' in countries belonging to the European Community has evolved over the past three decades as noted by Macbeth (1993: 52) who states that there has been 'growing recognition in Europe of the value of parent-teacher partnerships in educating the child'. He notes that beginning in the 1970s, many countries in the European Community passed legislation to establish school boards with parent and teacher membership. Another significant event in home-school relations was the establishment of the European Parents' Association (EPA) in 1985 which was funded by the European Commission (Macbeth, 1993).

A mother of French descent, Monique spoke about helping out in art classes, art fairs, and play productions in a school her children attended in the United States. She then talked about the lack of parent involvement with schools in France.

> *...And also I know I probably could do more things [more involvement], but I've never done that...we've never done that. And, you know...in France...you don't do that. Parents are not involved with the school at all. So, this is all a bit strange for...I don't feel very comfortable. I feel that I'm sort of interfering...although I know it's for a good cause, but I really enjoyed it [involvement in schools] in the States for art and if I can come and help, I'll do it. But, I'm not always available...taxi driver all the time for three kids. So, I can't commit myself to...in France...you know...the less the school sees the parents, the better they feel. 'This is our thing, then you get your kids back after school, not during school.' (Interview with parent, Monique)*

The preceding extract illustrates that the domains of school and home are separate in Monique's home country. Before the interview ended, Monique said that she was *'put off'* by the competition and fighting amongst parents involved in the PTA at the school her children attended in the United States. She concluded saying: *'So, after that...I sort of stayed away. Competing and fighting...It's not me.'*

A Danish mother, Julie who has been involved in her daughter's class reading in the international school, spoke about the reasons for the lack of involvement in Danish schools.

> *...they have those parent-teacher conferences twice a year. That's it. They never get to...well, I've been...for instance...in my daughter's class reading... whereas parents never do anything like that in Denmark. It's all left to the teachers (she laughs)...But, also in Denmark...all mothers work... (Interview with parent, Julie)*

A Belgian mother, Ingrid remarked that involvement of parents in schools is not a practice in Belgian schools.

> *...In Belgium, certainly in the Belgian school- 'no, they didn't want any help'. Every year...they had some type of family thing that you could help with... games or something...not anything like this [parent involvement in international school]. (Interview with parent, Ingrid)*

An Italian mother, Raphaella described the national curriculum in Italian schools as being strictly academic and she mentioned that parents are not involved 'at school' in her home country.

> *In Italy, the school...it's not the way. The school is only academic. You go to school at eight thirty in the morning and you finish at one twenty, that's it... you study...you go home...you eat, then you do whatever you want to do. Rugby is after school...you pay for it...extra. You go to school only for study. That's it...not social life...nothing else...no party, no book sale...nothing at all. So, you [parents] are not involved because there is no need. (Interview with parent, Raphaella)*

Raphaella talks about her lack of comfort in being involved in her son's education 'at school'. There is some ambivalence for Raphaella. Although she is very pleased with the fact that the school her son attends includes personal and social education and development, she implies that she does not feel a sense of belonging to the school community.

> *...So, I grow with that mentality and I feel it's very different for me now to fit the school. I love it...I think I love it... I love the way...because the American school...it's actually...develops...the personality which is...in Italy, they don't! The school doesn't think about the social life. You have to... (Raphaella)*

Raphaella feels strongly that schools should help children develop beyond academic growth. She spoke to me about adolescent depression and suicide as serious problems in Italy and feels that schools need to do more to prevent these tragedies. At this point, she directs the interview back to her discomfort about involvement 'at school' and speaks about her difficulties understanding English.

> *...So, I feel very, it's very difficult for me...I'm a sort of...I'm very new about this system [school], which we just start in April...But, I feel I'm not good for it, you know...people are talking very fast and I don't get it the first time... I feel it's not my way...you know...So, I feel not very comfortable ...you know? I feel a bit silly because I don't understand people talk to me once and then I have to say another time because I didn't understand. So, I prefer... you know, sort of...live...the other way...just to be a mother...to have my children...but, I can't be a very good help in the school because I don't feel very comfortable yet. (Raphaella)*

Raphaella was not the only non-American IM parent who expressed difficulty in communicating with the host school. I received six telephone calls from mothers who wanted more information about whether or not they would be able to fully participate with their child in the PSE programme. Most of their inquiries had to do with whether they would need to be able to speak fluent English in order to effectively participate. First, I explained to the parents that, if needed, their child could interpret for them and second, they could discuss the home assignments in any language with which they were comfortable. Last, their children were responsible for writing their responses to the topics of discussion in English on the assignment sheet. All of the parents who telephoned me about language concerns decided to participate after we discussed their concerns and queries.

Comer (1986) notes that the involvement of parents is not prevalent in the 'schooling' of children in non-American countries. He identifies Sweden and Japan as examples of countries where the involvement of parents 'at school' is not commonly practised. He offers some possible explanation for this and cautions:

> It is always unwise to compare too closely similar institutions in nations with different cultures. Because of its [United States] heterogeneity and size- and perhaps because of its stress on individuality as well-our [American] national culture lacks the cohesiveness of many others. Thus…we must be much more systematic in trying to develop a sense of co-operation at the building level than those in other cultures need be. Active and meaningful participation is an important way of developing that co-operation. (Comer, 1986: 446)

There may be other reasons why non-American IM mothers are less involved 'at school'. Helga claims that Scandinavian mothers are less likely to depend on the international school community to establish their social network for a variety of reasons.

> *…Many of the Scandinavian families who live here [England]… they lived here for ten years and they chose the [American international school] because it's a system that appeals to Scandinavian people. But, they have already…since they've lived here…many of them… 'I haven't'…but, many others have lived here ten or fifteen years…and they already have their social system around them. They have friends that they've known for years and they do other activities. They might play golf or they might work. Many of them*

> *work and they don't have time to get involved in school which I think...at least for the Scandinavian group...that's part of the reason. ...So, for those who already have a lot of things, a lot of friends...a lot of involvement [in school] ...they don't need it for that reason. (Interview with parent, Helga)*

There are other reasons for non-involvement. Helga thinks that Scandinavian people may experience feelings of being different and lack a sense of belonging because they're not involved in schools and not mixing with Americans and other nationalities.

> *...I also think that maybe some of the nationalities could be a bit put off by the school being American. They don't feel that they really can participate, they feel different...in a way. ...I'm actually asked that question quite often from friends who are Scandinavian... 'How come you have so many American friends?' Because many of them have a feeling that they're different. I don't think so. (Helga)*

This issue raises important questions. Do some non-American IM parents view the school as more American oriented? And, if so, is it difficult for non-American IM families to fit in?

Pearce (1998) notes:

> International schools have a range of strategies, some of them outstandingly good, for involving families in school life. Among the expatriates they find many competent professionals whose 'trailing spouse' status leaves them with a need to use time and skills. These can act as project leaders, but they will need some balancing influence to ensure that other cultures with different attitudes to school, different languages or communicative styles, and different concepts of duty, are not marginalised in the parent-school organisation. (Pearce, 1998: 57)

Students' Views About Family Involvement: Rules of Engagement

In my study, a majority of students (about 56%) made the decision to deliver the letter home to their parents which invited them to participate in the PSE programme and study. As noted in Chapter 3, for unidentified reasons, some students decided not to deliver the letter to their parents. Montandon (1993: 83) asserts that children often play an influential role in home - school relations and she challenges researchers who 'act as if children were just observers, with no particular influence'. She writes:

> Children exercise partial control on the contacts their parents and teachers try to establish, particularly when they are asked to transmit messages. They rarely act in a passive way. Depending for instance on the nature or the content of the various written messages, they may deliver, interpret, modify, or even purposely lose them. (Montandon, 1993: 84)

The students who delivered the letter about the PSE programme and study to their parents communicated their potential approval and interest to work with their parents during the PSE programme. This finding echoes the outcomes of earlier work by (Connors and Epstein, 1994; Epstein et al, 1994; Epstein and Lee, 1995). Epstein and Lee (1995: 118-119) write: 'most early adolescents say they are willing to interact with their family members (e.g., demonstrate skills, share ideas, interview families) if homework was designed to encourage these interactions'. However, interactive programmes involving families are not a common practice at the middle school level (Epstein and Lee, 1995).

Some types of family involvement, however, were not acceptable as far as the students in my study were concerned. For example, child embarrassment and feelings of uneasiness may occur when parents chaperone dances at school. Several students in my study brought the topic up during the interviews when we were talking about the involvement of parents at school. In addition, many parents mentioned that adolescents often start to have feelings of embarrassment about their parents participating at school around 7th and 8th grades. The issue of child embarrassment when parents chaperone has been documented in the literature (Connor and Epstein, 1994; Baker, 1997). My study echoes earlier findings (Baker, 1997) that some students (regardless of mobility status) set rules for their parents when they are in the school building concerning what type of parent involvement activities are acceptable (as noted in Chapter 2).

> *...I don't like my parents chaperoning though...I tell them not to every once in a while.* (Interview with student, Dennis)

Helga feels strongly that parents need to discuss what types of parent participation at school are acceptable to their children.

...Well, if they [parents] feel comfortable, I think so. And if their kids...if it's ok with the children. I think that it is very important because kids at this age [8th grade] ...they're embarrassed that their parents are involved and some are not. So, I think it has...I think the family has to sort of...sort that thing out. I don't have that problem because my daughter is not yet embarrassed when I do things at school. (Interview with parent, Helga)

But we don't have it [the issue of child embarrassment], but I've seen it and I can hear my daughter saying 'her [another student's] parents aren't ever going to be allowed to come to the dance anymore because they danced and they talked to us and we don't like that.' They don't like you [parents] to come in and watch what they're doing. You just have to pretend that you're not there. (Helga laughs)

Helga remarks that parents must '*not be obvious and not going up to a kid and asking 'why aren't you dancing? It's their life...you're not supposed to get too much involved.'* She emphasises that parents need to respect their child's private life and not intrude upon it. Helga remarked that at some point her daughter in the eighth grade will want more privacy- '*she [my daughter] doesn't object yet that I go there [school]*'.

Annika (Helga's daughter) talks about the involvement of parents 'at school' in a separate interview. Some students allow parents to chaperone the dances if their parents engage in a particular function and avoid specific types of behaviour, like staring and physical contact with them and their classmates.

The good thing about that is that I know a lot of people...they...my mom chaperones the dances a lot and I know that when my friends...their parents come and chaperone...they are...like 'oh, no...I hate that. They always stare at me and it drives me crazy.' I don't mind my mom coming because... she...I made a deal with her. I told her at the very beginning... 'no staring or you can't come any more'. (Interview with student, Annika)

Annika tests her mother and finds that her mother observes the rules.

...And she took me serious...and I look at her every now and then and there's not one time that I've actually seen her looking at me. I would walk up to her and say 'hi' and stuff...I mean...I act just normally to her when she's there. I go up to her and say 'hello' and talk to her, but when I leave it's like we're in completely different rooms, so I don't mind her being there. So, I think that's good that I can sort of...give the same way...she can gives rules to

> *me...I can give rules to her. And I think that worked out well. So, I mean...my mom does a lot of things that other [mothers don't do]...we have a really open sort of relationship. (Annika)*

I asked Annika if staring at the students during the dance was the main problem and she responded:

> *A lot of people hate the dads coming. I can understand that some moms...my mom has told me time and time again that moms actually come up to her and say 'who is she [my daughter] dancing with? and 'who is that?' I can understand that and it drives them absolutely crazy. If it were my mom...did that...I would say 'you can't come anymore. Go away. Please leave me alone. This is my time, not you time to interfere.' One mom got up and started dancing with the boys in the same grade and the girl [her daughter] just about died and I can understand it because I would haul my mom out if she did that or have a* ***serious*** *talk with her if she ever did that again. (Annika)*

Annika concluded by saying that when her mother chaperones the dances *'she busies herself with something...talking to the principal or serving drinks...she just does what she is supposed to do.'*

An American mother with four children talks about her involvement in schools over the years and brings up the issue of child embarrassment.

> *So, umm...and it's just...and I've enjoyed being, you know...at different ages... they like...they find it awkward to have mom involved...especially as they get older and especially maybe 7th and 8th grade...they're kind of... 'iffy' about it. It seems like once they get in high school, they're kind of beyond it in most ways...and it's ok...I mean, they don't want...I found that especially substituting [as a teacher]in the high school...that my oldest one does not want me to act like a kid...She just wants me to be a teacher and don't try to get involved in her things...just let her lead her school life. (Interview with parent, Dora)*

Sarah, an American mother and teacher at the school spoke about involvement decreasing as children advance from lower school to middle school. She believes that children have ambivalent feelings about their parents being involved 'at school'.

> *...You don't hardly see parents hardly at all during school time. They do the dances and parties and stuff like that. But, you don't really see them [in school]. I think... to some extent...especially when you get towards eighth*

> *grade...some of the kids feel like they don't want their parents there [in school]. In fact, one parent had said that to me...they're getting to the stage where they're embarrassed of their parents or wanting more to keep their distance. But, it seems to me, in general, that the kids here [at this school] have a good relationship with their parents. They might say that [they don't want their parents at school] initially, but when they [parents] actually got there, they'd be kind of glad with it. (Interview with parent, Sarah)*

This ambivalence of students raises important questions. Are parents who have a high quality relationship with their children allowed more participation in their child's lives/schooling? Do some children need their parent's support more than other children? How much of a role does peer pressure play in influencing whether or not parents are involved in their children's education? How critical is this involvement for the IM family?

Sarah makes an important point about how parents are involved 'at school'.

> *I think...our kids are all really proud of us being here, you know. They feel really good about it. And so, I think that would happen with other kids as well. If their mother or father had an official purpose here, you know...say they were doing some function for the teacher, not just hanging around. I think the kids would feel good about it. (Sarah)*

During another interview, an American mother used the term 'boundaries' and explained that she is careful to stay within the boundaries set by her children. This mother felt strongly that parents need to stay involved in their children's lives and be visible 'at school'.

> *...And, I think you have to stay involved. That's the only way you're going to know what your kids are doing and they want you to be involved. I have laughed at these moms that at...the classroom mother meetings...they'll say 'oh, my kids don't want me to come to the dances. I can't possibly chaperone.' And, I said: 'no, you're wrong. You know they tell you they don't want you to be there, but they really want to see you. They want to see you on campus. They may not want you coming up and grabbing them and hugging and kissing them, but they want to know that you're there and that you care.' So, I think it's really important. So, I'm as visible as I can be without overstepping my bounds. I'm not allowed in the lunchroom any longer when my kids are there. 'Don't come near the table, I don't want to see you!' But, you know...walking down the hall is fine. (laughter)(Interview with parent, Susan)*

Many questions remain unanswered. Do adolescents say they don't want their parents involved at school, but really do want them to be involved? Do parents who want to be involved at school like to think their children want them there?

Not all parents play by the rules.

> *...Yah, well, the kids a lot of times don't want you involved...that's never stopped me in the past...if I've wanted to be involved or there, I'm there. You know...they don't want to see your face around there because it's real embarrassing that your mom is coming to school again...I generally find myself in an involved situation if I'm suspicious about something that's going on in the classroom...something just doesn't seem right...umm...I try to get my nose in there... just to kind of...not to try and change anything or tell the teacher what to do, just to kind of get it from a different perspective. (Interview with parent, Maureen)*

Rachel spoke about her involvement in school as the drama liaison for the middle school and high school and so she would spend a lot of time at school.

> *...Yeah...just about. Interestingly, in ninth grade, [my daughter] hated having me around...she just couldn't stand that I was around so much...didn't want me to talk to her, single her out at all. And by mid year, last year of tenth grade, it was alright. I had been accepted by the kids, they liked me. She could now accept me and I wasn't as much a threat. I didn't embarrass her anymore. (Rachel laughs) And I think, you know...it's just a phase they go through too when your parents embarrass the hell out of you. And I think she [my daughter] is outgrowing that whereas [my son in grade 8] is just entering that (Rachel laughs) In fact, he's told me... 'Don't ever come chaperone any of the dances'. (laughter again) You know...so, it's just a phase they go through. (Interview with parent, Rachel)*

Conclusion

As evidenced in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, individual family members in IM families need each other for support and family involvement in education is a way for IM families to be involved with each other. International mobility can significantly influence family involvement in education and family involvement can be a way of managing transience. Through family involvement in education, IM families can manage important dimensions of family life and IM parents can monitor their child's

development with particular attention to how their child is managing relocation and transience.

International schools can play a key role in supporting IM families. When the IM family's 'home culture' is different from the 'school culture', international schools need to explore ways to decrease cultural and language barriers and feelings of alienation, which may inhibit family involvement in education. Home – based interactive PSE programmes, like the type used in my study can be designed to be inclusive of IM families regardless of diverse or different cultural backgrounds.

CHAPTER 7

HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP: PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION

Introduction

This chapter draws on data relating to the PSE intervention to interrogate in more detail, through this concrete example, two of the central concerns of this thesis: What tactics can families use to support the thriving of TCKs? What is the potential contribution of International Schooling practices in this process?

In Chapter 5, I explored how the IM families in my study survive the challenges of international mobility and, even thrive from their experiences. It was not surprising that the IM families in my study, experienced at employing tactics to manage transience, used the PSE programme as a vehicle to discuss important aspects of family life and sensitive topics as well as issues surrounding their international mobility. For the families in the study, participation in the PSE programme facilitated parent-adolescent communication which is critical for IM families because transience may place IM children in a position of having no one else to talk to!

IM parents are well aware of the great personal and social changes occurring in the world today because they live at the forefront of these global changes. They also recognise their responsibility to help their children accommodate these changes as they develop toward adulthood.

> The more complex the future is expected to be, the more active parents will invest in the preparation of their children, and the more dependent children will be on their parents' support. (Frones et al., 1998: 5)

The extracts selected for this chapter are a sub-set of the total data set and were drawn from key informants who were able to articulate their perspectives and experiences in a powerful style (see Table 12). Interview extracts have been carefully selected to provide a 'voice' from the families in the study. In this chapter, I explore a 'voice' (albeit limited) from fathers who have been largely neglected in past research (Stacey,

1991; Gelles, 1995) and a 'voice' from students (as noted in chapter 2) who have not been thoroughly researched (Scott Stein and Thorkildsen, 1999). In several sections of the chapter, I have been able to include interview extracts from more than one member of the families, which demonstrates the use of triangulation and adds depth and dimension to the study.

Table 12.

Respondents in Chapter 7

Name (Pseudo-nym)	Parent (P) or Student (S)	*Birth Country/ Country of Origin	Nationality	Other Details
Sherry	P	Canada	Canadian	3 children
Frank	P	The Netherlands	Dutch	2 children
Rhonda	P	US	American	2 children
Norma	P	US	American	2 children
Mary	P	US	American	2 children
Sally	P	US	American	3 children
Karl	P	Denmark	Danish	3 children, Partner of Julie (in Chap. 6)
Patrick	P	US	American	3 children
Helena	P	India	Canadian	2 children
Jane	P	Canada	Canadian	2 children
Mary Ann	P	US	American	2 children
Susan	P	US	American	3 children
Helga	P	Sweden	Swedish	3 children, Mother of Annika
Ingrid	P	Belgium	Belgian	3 children, Mother of Nicola
Katie	P	US	American	5 children
Monique	P	France	French	3 children
Dora	P	US	American	4 children
Diane	P	Canada	Canadian	2 children
Mareka	P	Sweden	Swedish	3 children
Jessica	P	Canada	French Canadian	2 children, Partner of Greg
Greg	P	Canada	Canadian	Partner of Jessica
Dede	P	Canada	Canadian	2 children
Steven	P	US	American	2 children
Margarite	P	Canada	British Canadian	2 children
Joanna	P	US	American	2 children
Doug	S	*	American	Son of Dora
Manuel	S	*	Hispanic	Son of Maritza (in Chap. 4, 5)
Keiko	S	*	*	Japanese parents
Eileen	S	*	*	Daughter of American mother, Lynn (in Chap. 4, 5)
Hannah	S	*	*	Oldest of 4 children, American parents

Name (Pseudo-nym)	Parent (P) or Student (S)	*Birth Country/ Country of Origin	Nationality	Other Details
Kathleen	S	*	*	Daughter of American mother, Denise (Chap. 4, 6)
Annika	S	*	Swedish	Daughter of Helga
Nikolas	S	*	Danish	Son of Benedicte
Oscar	S	*	Swedish	Son of Mareka
Nicola	S	*	*	Daughter of Ingrid

* (Birth Country/Country of Origin or Nationality not identified)

Based upon the systematic coding of data, the following themes emerged:

- The Importance and Value of PSE
- The Complexities of Parent-Adolescent Relationships
- Dealing with Needs
- The Challenges of Discussing Sensitive Topics
- Teaching About Values, Morals, and Sensitive Topics: Who, What and When?

The Importance and Value of PSE

During the interviews with families, many parents and students spoke about the importance and value of participating in the PSE programme. The PSE programme included the need for communication and interaction between adolescent students and their peers that would usually be part of any PSE programme, but also included a parent involvement component. As a teacher of PSE, involvement of parents in the course as well as peers had seemed worth attempting to facilitate. However, international mobility and transience became central and critical as these significant themes emerged from my coding of the data. Gelles (1995: 290) notes that 'Parents are the primary agents of socialisation, and the family is the major setting for socialisation'. For purposes of this thesis, socialisation may be defined as a process in which:

> ...individuals not only learn the values, norms, and skills of their culture but alsoacquire a sense of who they are and where they belong. (Gelles, 1995: 290)

As noted by Gelles (1995) above and as evidenced earlier in my thesis, developing a personal identity and establishing 'roots' and 'a sense of belonging' can be very complex issues for IM children and their parents. It is important to state that children are not passive agents whilst their parents socialise them, but instead the process of socialisation is dynamic and usually a two way process of communication between parents and their children. As noted in Chapter 5, Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 22) have identified two major aspects which they believe mould the TCK life experience - growing up in 'a cross-cultural world' and in 'a highly mobile world'. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) argue that it is these two aspects which together make it possible for IM children to derive both benefits and challenges from their life experiences. Important questions are raised. How do IM teenagers develop a sense of personal identity growing up in a multi-cultural and mobile environment? How can schools through the use of PSE programmes support IM families and help them thrive being IM?

The personal, emotional and social development of the IM children matters greatly to the families in the study. Sherry, a Canadian mother remarked that the PSE programme was her daughter's 'most important class'.

> *...Quite frankly, I can look down a report card and if I feel like a child is doing well in anything to do with social relationships, enthusiasm, attitude...it means far more to me than anything else that's there...so not to say that the school shouldn't provide a academic arena, but to me it's totally pointless. I take my degree and...mostly what I got out of my degrees was the social interaction...anda sense of worth. And that's all really that matters. So, however, that can be nurtured and engendered in the school environment, I'm all for it. I just think it's the best thing. It's [PSE] a most relevant subject. And, you know... kids are thrown into a high school environment, they're rotated from class to class...the teachers don't get to know them as well and the worse case scenario would be that they just become little academic robots whose feelings and hearts don't really matter. And that's the only thing that does matter! (Interview with parent, Sherry)*

Courtman (1996) writes about the significant relationship between emotional development and learning. He notes:

> It is worth remembering that all learning (academic and personal/social) is both a function of and dependent upon emotional growth and development:

> the emotionally troubled are not up for learning and that learning is in itself an emotional experience that is different for each individual...it is emotional development that lies at the heart of all learning. (Courtman, 1996: 4-5)

Norma, an American mother had similar views about the importance of social and emotional development. She felt strongly that it is perhaps the last time to assess her children's values and discuss what is important in life before her children progress to high school.

> *...and, anything that I can do to encourage my kids and...in...social and emotional things are more important to me than scholastic things, because if they grow up to be good people, that's really all that matters. ...Yeah, they are almost... they are on their way...by that time...before that even... they are their own person, but I think it is like a last base to see where they are and what are their values...what is important and...I think that is a great time to remind them of what is important and the drugs...and the drug thing...you can't tell them enough...of course...(Interview with parent, Norma)*

There has been a lot of debate about what PSE should focus on and some educators believe strongly that emotional development is critical education for young people, and can be particularly so for IM children. Schaetti (2000: 30) stresses the importance that education 'be relevant to the student's life experience' which for 'global nomads' or 'TCKs' means that PSE needs to focus on their 'mobility' and 'intercultural interaction' which are the major elements which shape the IM experience.

The extracts to follow illustrate the views and reactions of parents and their teenage children about their participation in the PSE programme. Doug, an American student valued the lifeskills education.

> *I think this [PSE programme] should be taught at every school because it helps people with their life...their family...with growing up...with drugs and stuff...a programme which focuses on life...(Interview with student, Doug, son of Dora)*

A Hispanic student, Manuel spoke about the benefits of the PSE programme.

> *...I think they [PSE assignments] were useful. They are topics that will come up in life...and you do need to be aware of...at least a little...so you have like a bit of knowledge and you can choose a path and look at your options*

> *better. ...It's better to take the class instead of learning the hard way...(Interview with student, Manuel)*

A female student, Keiko stated: '*I thought it [PSE programme] was good because we [my mother and I never like...really talked about these kinds of things before, and so we got like a chance to talk about it'.*

Ingrid, a Belgian mother remarked that she wished that she could have had a PSE programme when she was growing up.

> *...It sounds silly, but I mean...if you hear nowadays...about relationships and stuff ...indeed, it's almost like you need a course to prepare for life...real life. I mean...I think we all could have done with a bit in our day. (Interview with parent, Ingrid)*

A Canadian father viewed involvement of parents in the PSE programme as a *'teaching tool for parents to understand what's current' (Interview with parent, Greg).*

A female student, Eileen spoke about the reason and she and her mother agreed to participate in the PSE programme/study.

> *...me and mom thought it would be interesting to do this [PSE programme] together, so we both could learn more about it and help me to learn things that I need to know to mature. (Interview with student, Eileen, daughter of Lynn)*

In the extract to follow, an American mother, Katie talks about how the PSE programme facilitated communication with her daughter.

> *...I think they [PSE programme] were such important topics...you know...sometimes you sit down with your kids...and 'oh, mom...we know this stuff' and they close their mind. They think they know it. There is so much they don't know and they won't admit to not knowing it (Katie laughs) So, it gave me a chance...it gave me a captive audience in a sense ...even if she doesn't say much, I know she is thinking about it and... (Interview with parent, Katie)*

The challenge of educating young people and filling in their gaps of knowledge is an important one. Head (1999: 51) writes that there is a 'need to create the opportunities

for discussion in which youth can have their ideas challenged and lack of knowledge addressed'.

Many mothers identified time pressures as a reason for not having serious and important talks with their children. Dora, an American mother with four children who worked with her adolescent son during the PSE programme had this to say.

> *...It [PSE programme discussions] would almost be like a...I don't want to say like a 'happy hour', but...just a relaxed conversation...sharing type of thing. And it was kind of special time together...is what it ends up being... because with four children, it's easy to overlook having special time and one should really dropeverything...what you're doing and go...so...yah...always have something to do. (Interview with parent, Dora, mother of Doug)*

Fathers had time pressures as well. A Canadian father, Greg spoke honestly about his initial thoughts about working with his son during the PSE programme and his surprise to find the discussion valuable.

> *...Well, actually, honestly...after I put in my 13 hour day and had dinner, I really didn't feel all that excited about sitting down and doing this [PSE assignment]. But, [my partner] said... 'sit down with your son...we're going to have a discussion. So, we did and actually after we got going with it...and I didn't know what to expect...but, I guess I made a preconceived judgement that its going to be more of a pain than anything else. But, actually once we got into...we spent quite a bit of time talking about it...it was interesting stuff to talk about. It not only made him think, but it makes you think, too...a little bit about some of these areas you probably don't spend a lot of time thinking about...let alone talking about within the family. (Interview with father, Greg)*

A female student, Hannah appreciated the time she got to spend alone with her parents.

> *...yeah, it [PSE programme]led to conversation...it gave me a chance to sit down with my mom and dad and just talk. I don't get a chance to do that a lot \because of all the little kids, I have three little sisters. (Interview with student, Hannah)*

Dede, a Canadian mother viewed her participation in the course with her daughter as 'an opportunity for the two of us to sit down and talk'. She also commented:

'...everyone's busy nowadays...and you could schedule it [discussion] into the day'.

Susan had similar views.

> *...I think certainly any door or any opening to talk to your children about these things is wonderful and great because in the normal course...certainly in my life here [England], I have very little time because I'm over involved...I do too many things...to sit down and have these kinds of discussions on my own...to think them up...even to have the time to think them up...I mean you barely have time to eat dinner, help with homework, read to my little ones, get baths and showers...to be...you know...(Interview with parent, Susan)*

Helena, a mother of Canadian nationality and Indian ethnicity commented on the value of the PSE programme and home/school partnership:

> *...And, I think that this [parent involvement in PSE programme] is an excellent thing ... especially for this kind of subject. I wish that more schools would be doing it like this. It is perhaps maybe the best way...is...to get parents involved. You [interviewer] mapped it out for us [parents and children]...you have planted the 'seed' for parents for future conversations...[with their children]...an 'opener'... 'remember we [parent and adolescent] talked about that...' (Interview with parent, Helena)*

Home/school partnerships of the type used in my study may prove invaluable for IM families needing to explore the challenges involved in the emotional process of transience.

The Complexities of Parent-Adolescent Relationships

This section explores the complexities of parent-adolescent relationships and provides a lens through which to examine the relationships of families in the study. Methodologically, it may be difficult to study families as 'researching family life is challenging'...due to the 'complex relationships and negotiations' between family members (Health Education Authority, 1996: 6). It is important to note that parent-adolescent relationships are dynamic and shaped by the family members within the context of their lives. It is equally important to consider that the families in the study are internationally mobile which may significantly influence their relationships by the ways they manage cohesiveness and independence (as noted in Chapter 5).

> In the parent-child relationship, there is a constant interaction between the personalities involved, the relationships they create, and the environments

> that supports or stresses them. Personalities and environments create relationships, child-rearing practices, and child development. (Ambert, 1997: 23)

Other factors that may contribute to the complexities of parent-adolescent relationships are the age and developmental stage of the students in the study and the need for their parents and their teenage children to accommodate changes in their relationships within family life (Noom and Dekovic, 1998; Kreppner and Ullrich, 1990). Noller et al (2001: 46) note that 'Adolescence is a developmental turning point that marks the passage to maturity'. They write:

> Working through this stage demands psychological adjustment to a dramatic and far-reaching sequence of changes, including important changes in the nature and quality of personal relationships...adolescents face their central social challenge: balancing the paradox of independence, of autonomy and connection, in a broadening context of relationships with both family and peers. (Noller et al, 2001: 46)

This issue raises important questions. How do IM families manage the developmental task of adolescence and negotiate changes in parent-adolescent relationships? Do IM families experience increased difficulty in balancing independence and dependence due to strong family cohesiveness?

During the interviews, approximately 60 percent of parents made comments about their adolescent sons and daughters becoming quiet and more private around the age of 13 to 14 years old. Families in the study raised the issues of parent-child separation, peer pressure to discourage communication with parents as well as shyness and embarrassment as factors that influence adolescent mood and behaviour. All of these issues may play a role in shaping how parents and their adolescent children communicate and interact together.

In the following extracts, Kathleen, a female student gives her views about parent-adolescent communication.

> *I think it's good to talk to your parents because usually you just don't really talk to your parents...you just get home and 'how was your day?' and 'it was ok 'and then you go to your room .It's good to talk to your parents...talk*

> *about things you wouldn't normally talk about. (Interview with student, Kathleen)*

Ambivalence may be a common feature during adolescence and this may significantly influence parent-adolescent communication. Noller et al (2001) make the point that:

> As adolescents strive to become emotionally independent of their parents, there can be fluctuations in levels of intimacy expressed in the relationship, with adolescents being very confiding at some points and very distant and protective of their privacy at others. (Noller et al, 2001: 142)

As an 8th grade student, Kathleen explains that school life is less stimulating in comparison to when she first began middle school.

> *I think as you get older you get more private because when you're little...just starting middle school...you are so excited and you want to tell your mom and dad what happened, but then when you get older...it's not that big a deal anymore. So...just sort of keep everything inside. It's like the same everyday or it was just nothing...like nothing was a big deal. Unless you get good grades or something...that you are really excited about that...You're normally not a good student and you get a good grade...you tell your parent when you got home... 'I got a really good grade on this' or something... (Interview with student, Kathleen)*

Kathleen mentions reasons why she thinks some students do not communicate with their parents.

> *...Yeah, I think if there is something to talk about, then we talk, but it's just like people ...kids don't talk to their parents because of what other kids think because they think...well, some kids just don't like their parents, don't want to talk to their parents...so, other kids think...ok...well, maybe I shouldn't talk to my parents because I'm getting older now and they don't need to know what is going on in my life...as much as they used to...and like they try to grow up without having parents and then some kids...just like...can't do anything without their parents. (Kathleen)*

In the preceding extract, Kathleen believes that parent-adolescent communication is influenced by peer pressure, the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship, and the presence of increased dependence of some adolescents on their parents. Coleman (1993) offers an explanation to account for the complexities of parent-adolescent relationships during adolescence. He writes:

...the transition [of adolescence]...results from the operation of a number of pressures. Some of these, in particular the physiological and emotional pressures, are internal; while other pressures, which originate from peers, parents, teachers, and society at large, are external to the young person. Sometimes these external pressures carry the individual towards maturity at a faster rate than he or she prefers, while on other occasions they act as a break, holding the adolescent back from freedom and independence which he or she believes to be a legitimate right. It is the interplay of these forces which, in the final analysis, contributes more than anything to the success or failure of the transition from childhood to maturity. (Coleman, 1993: 138)

Kathleen raises an important point: *'it's really up to the person [adolescent] who does it, if they want to have a better relationship with their parents then they should communicate with their parents'*. Furthermore, Kathleen remarks that confrontation does not help and mentions that she and her mother have worked this issue out.

> *...the parents think you are just trying not to communicate with them and they end up starting something that shouldn't be started...like they end up saying like ... 'why don't you ever talk to me after school?' and that just brings up a fight. That doesn't happen in my case cause my mom knows that if I want to talk...I talk. (Interview with student, Kathleen)*

A Dutch father, Frank also spoke about the difficulty of trying to have a conversation with his children.

> *...yah, it's so complicated to do because you come home for dinner and say 'ok kids, tell me about your school day and what did you talk about today?' They're [my children] are going to look at you and say 'that's none of your business.' (Frank laughs)*

Frank recalls the time he worked with his daughter during her economics course and comments that it is easier to communicate about other areas of your child's life when working with your child on a project. He notes that communication is a two way process and parents and their children need to be open and willing to talk with each other simultaneously.

> *...What happens in a process like this is...it's a bit more natural...Yah...it's got to fit. Sometimes you come home and you've had a shitty day... 'don't talk to me for an hour'...then maybe after I've fallen asleep on the couch and wake up...I'm able to talk about things again. You both [parents and kids] have to be in the proper state of mind to do it. (Interview with parent, Frank)*

Another important factor that may significantly influence the nature of parent-adolescent relationships is gender. Ambert (1997) writes:

> One key element in people's lives is how society constitutes gender. Gender is an element of the parent-child relationship that has life-long implications in that parents relate to their offspring on the basis of the child's gender; fathers do so more than mothers. Children also react differently to fathers and mothers. Therefore, gender roles are at the root of many parent-child interactions.(Ambert, 1997: 36)

During the study, I observed some patterns. There were definite trends for many female students in the study to prefer to discuss sensitive topics with their mothers and not their fathers. However, this 'preference' could be a pragmatic necessity within the IM family setting as Rhonda notes:

> *...we had the privacy and she is not one to ask these questions in front of Dad...you know...Dad is the businessman, he travels internationally... ..different roles...at least in our family unit...(Interview with parent, Rhonda)*

There were male students who worked on sensitive assignments themselves because they were too embarrassed to talk about these topics with either of their parents, especially their mothers. However, there were some male students who worked with both parents discussing planned pregnancy and the HIV case studies and there were others who worked with their fathers or mothers. There were male students who had not previously discussed sex education topics with their parents who decided to test their ability to do this. A Canadian father, Greg was surprised that his son was comfortable talking about sensitive topics.

> *...I was actually pleasantly surprised at how comfortable he [my son] seemed to be...just talking about virtually everything that was there (PSE topics]. There wasn't anything...some of the things...I think...I would have felt uncomfortable talking to my parents at his age. ...But, ...he was relaxed about talking about them and actually knew a bit more than I expected him to about topics...that was a good learning experience for us to hear what he had to say...because we asked him to participate in the conversation, not just take dictation.(Interview with parent, Greg).*

During the interviews, parents who had both sons and daughters frequently compared the personalities and communication patterns of their children. And parents who had daughters only or sons only were curious about what it would be like to communicate

with children of different gender. Although only a few parents remarked that their daughters were quiet and withholding in their communication, many more parents remarked that their sons were quiet and shy and it was hard to get a conversation going with them. Beidel and Turner (1998: 84) note that the term 'shy' is 'used to describe a pattern of reticence associated with social situations'. Larson and Richards (1994: 83) found that adolescents in their study felt 'self -conscious' and 'embarrassed' and further reported: '...social discomfort on a wide range of dimensions' which included feelings of awkwardness, loneliness and nervousness.

Katie, an American mother with five daughters comments on what she considers the advantages of being able to work with her daughter during the PSE programme.

> *...The biggest thing...I think...is to understand what your child is thinking...you know, how often do we [parents] get into their deeper thoughts like this? Or do they [children] share them? And this particular child of mine* ***does not share her thoughts*** *(Katie emphasises these words) It is a rare thing when she opens up to me.I have to really make myself available and when she does open up, I have to pay attention...because it's so rare. And I often don't know if there is a problem in her life until I hear from somebody else first. So, it was a real treat for me with her to be able to read her feelings. She is probably my most reserved as far as sharing her emotions and so that was... probably the biggest advantage for me was understanding her feelings and then sharing a more mature outlook just to broaden her view of things.....I learned that she [my daughter] has a pretty good depth... I respected her maturity. I felt like she had a little more maturity than I would have thought... (Interview with parent, Katie)*

During a joint interview with two parents, an American father remarked that working with his son during the PSE programme *'was quite positive'*. His partner, Mary remarked that it has been difficult for them to know what their son's thoughts and feelings are due to his shyness and introvert personality

> *...I think we learned a lot about him [our son]...just to know his thoughts and his ideas...we were really interested because...you know...he's not one who sits down and communicates with us very easily and we don't know why. He's always been very shy and kind of kept everything to himself. So, this was an opportunity for us as well as for you [researcher]. Don't you agree? (Mary)*

Nelson-Jones (1992: 142) states that 'shyness is a problem for children, adolescents and adults alike'. He also notes that children may learn to be shy from parents who are shy (Nelson-Jones, 1992). Shyness may further challenge communication between parents and their children and perhaps more so for IM children and their parents.

Sally, an American mother commented on how participating in the PSE programme facilitated communication with her son.

> *...it [PSE programme] opens a door to talk to them [children] about all these things. It's very hard at this age...I think...to sit down and talk about it. I think those [PSE assignments] are great...opportunities, particularly when you have a personality like my son's because he will not open up...without a...something... a vehicle like this... (Interview with parent, Sally)*

On this issue, it has been found that it may be more difficult for boys to discuss private matters and consequently this may increase feelings of isolation (HEA, 1996). This finding raises an important question concerning IM boys. Are IM boys at a higher risk of isolation in light of father absence from the family and transience associated with an IM lifestyle?

Margarite, a Canadian mother talks about the importance of communicating with your children and commented that she and her son had to work on communicating openly and listening to each other.

> *...You might not work well together at times, but I think that is ok, too. That is par for the course. And that is ok. It is ok to disagree, too. That's something else... my son would say to me once or twice, 'well, you are not listening to me.' And, I would say, 'but, you're not listening to me.' We would go from there, and I don't think that there were any big disadvantages...(Interview with parent, Margarite)*

Dealing with Needs

The PSE programme served as a catalyst and springboard for family discussion. Close (1997) argues that PSE content is best tailored by teachers, schools, and the communities involved, so the course is effective in meeting the needs of young people and avoids the pitfalls of being too narrowly focused. Although the PSE programme in

the study was designed using pre-determined topics and questions for discussion, the parents and their adolescent children could negotiate with each other and direct the discussions to meet their needs as families.

Maryann, an American mother spoke about the flexibility of the course.

> *...it was something which generated discussion and had a lot of meaning and could be done however you wanted...they're [PSE assignments] as much as you want to make them be...I think you can get out of it what you need to.' (Interview with parent, Maryann)*

Dede remarked that working on the PSE programme with her daughter made her realise that she hasn't prepared her daughter enough for approaching adulthood.

> *...There were other things that...you know...by doing this that I realise maybe I've been a little lax. You know...it's so easy nowadays to get caught up in all there is to do...and it's funny because all of a sudden you'll stop and you'll think...I've never taught her that or I've never given her my opinion on that...and that sort of thing. And I think that if nothing else this sort of...you know... 'hello'...that time is passing and that you can't make this up...like some of these issues, you know, like it was a good reminder that some of these things we should betalking about now. (Interview with parent, Dede)*

Margarite keeps close contact with her son and justifies her action in this way.

> *You want to say...what's happening to them? They are not quite grown up yet...at this age...and I think it is important to get these insights. I mean...they go off every morning...there's a whole life out there that we're both living...I mean, I think that it is important to keep in touch...even on a daily basis. It is important. And, this is where little problems start. They have to start somewhere. They are beginning to break away. I think their identity...I mean, they are growing, but it is important and that is why it is extra important to keep in touch. (Margarite)*

There has been a lot of debate about when is the 'right' time to give adolescents more independence and whether or not parents should continue to be involved in their teenage children's lives. Coleman (1993) claims that there is a potentially harmful misconception concerning adolescence. He writes:

> One of the more damaging stereotypes of youth is that because they are seeking independence, they have no further need of the adults around them. Nothing could be further from the truth. All teenagers need support, not only from their parents, but from other adults as well. Of course if this is not

> available, adolescents will turn to the peer group, but it has to be remembered that this only occurs when relationships with adults are poor, or are seen to be damaging. (Coleman, 1993: 145)

The need for continued parental support may be even more critical for IM teenagers who may not have anyone else for long periods of time due to mobility patterns and transience.

On the issue of independence, Head (1999) notes:

> …Although tensions commonly exist between youth and adults they do not represent the whole story. In fact, there is a continuing dynamic between the wish for independence and, at the same time, for interest and support. (Head, 1999: 33)

Margarite spoke about the importance of maintaining open lines of communication with her son.

> *...I think it is good to be on the scene at this age, too... with your child and... they're making lots of decisions and you know... the question of values. They are growing toward the future and it is important to talk to each other...But, I mean...I think it is important to know what is going on with someone else who is close to you, especially your child. (Interview with parent, Margarite)*

Parents and their teenage children used the PSE programme as a vehicle to work out problems as well as to discuss important topics, like friendship and values for example. Discussing friendship topics can be critical for IM children who may be experiencing cycles of losing friends which can be quite challenging, as noted in Chapter 4 (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001). Through the use of PSE, schools can support IM children and can assist IM parents in monitoring how their children are managing mobility and transience.

Several students reviewed their friendships and informally told me that they made some changes as a result of their participation in the PSE programme. In the extract to follow, Annika, a Swedish female student was experiencing some relationship difficulties with her friends.

...I was sort of split between two groups of friends and I knew I didn't belong to them, but sometimes they were nice and I wasn't sure if I belonged to the other [group] but, at the same time sometimes they weren't so nice. And, sometimes I felt like I didn't belong anywhere, and so just talking over these things...I didn't really know how to approach that [the problem] with my mom and so this[PSE assignment] helped because once I brought the topic [up]...I could sort of turn it into another discussion. (Interview with student, Annika, daughter of Helga)

Helga, Annika's mother spoke about her daughter's friendship difficulties and also commented on her approach in communicating with her daughter.

> *...Well, actually probably, I think that she...in some respects she is more mature than I think. I always kind of considered that she is mature, but you know...I do... sometimes our talks at home, not with these papers [PSE assignments]...tend to be me trying to help by telling her how things are...especially with the social values and friendships that she has had some problems with. And, finally I realised that she just thought that I was lecturing. And...I think that is...so, I stopped it a bit and I think that it was good thing...that it became more of a discussion. And, I realise that even if she thought I was lecturing, and even if she was fed up with my long speeches about...family values and (laughter) different things and how to have things in life, she has obviously taken a lot of the things...I feel...to her heart and also...obviously discussed it with her friends in class because I think that some of the points she made were surprisingly mature or well thought through...(Interview with parent, Helga)*

Maryann, an American mother and her daughter were experiencing some friendship problems and they used the PSE assignments to discuss some of their real life issues.

> *...I'm just remembering something now, too...things are the way they are meant to be...and I'm thinking...we may have gotten more involved in the one [PSE assignment] about friendship...and had more time...it just came that way because friendship was a* ***big*** *(Maryann emphasises the word 'big') issue for me and [my daughter] at the start of this year [school year]...I...over the summer... I had had a* ***crisis****, you know...betrayal by a friend...that just really shook me to the core...and [my daughter] was kind of feeling the same way about her eighth grade friends, too...there was a lot going on,...And call it serendipity or synchronicity, but I mean coming at the beginning of the year when we didn't have all these pressures of school and everything, so we really did get involved in that [PSE assignment]. But, it was also something both of us wanted and needed to talk about...We talked a lot about friends...and she [my daughter] helped me. (Interview with parent, Maryann)*

As noted earlier in the thesis, IM fathers frequently spend time away from home on work related travel. Given the opportunity to be involved in a flexible, home - school partnership, it was evident that the fathers in my study wanted to be involved as much as possible in the PSE programme with their families. Approximately 85 per cent of fathers from the 42 two-parent families who participated in the PSE programme, worked on at least two of the eight PSE assignments with their children (see Table 6, Chapter 3). A Canadian mother, Jessica commented about the importance of father and son communication:

> *It [PSE programme] opened the door for his father and himself [son] to talk... I don't think fathers have a lot of time to talk to kids...kids never hear dads talk because they are so busy. (Interview with parent, Jessica)*

According to their partners, if fathers missed an assignment because of work related travel, their partners updated them about the discussion that took place with the children. Norma, an American mother gave her views.

> *...on some of the ones [PSE topics] that...I thought...were more important was the values and friendships and stuff like that...I did share with my husband what my son had said and what his values were...saying 'you know he really is alright and he does have his values...' And he [my husband] was real happy to hear it and I think he was there [home] for maybe one of maybe two [PSE assignments] or sometimes we [my husband and I] discussed it afterwards. (Interview with parent, Norma)*

Epstein (1995) stresses the need for schools to become more flexible in offering 'opportunities for families to volunteer at various times and various places to support the school and their children' (Epstein, 1995: 703). Initiatives, such as home study programmes can decrease the exclusion of parents, especially fathers, single parents and parents employed fulltime who may find it difficult to be involved in their children's education 'at school'.

One of the PSE assignments was to identify advantages and disadvantages of planned pregnancy. This PSE topic triggered discussion about family histories. Two Canadian mothers and one Canadian father related to me personal discussions they had with their teenage children.

...And I found that [planned pregnancy topic] the most valuable one, but he [my son] is just starting to go through puberty. And I find that my daughter now is more mature because she was already menstruating, she already understood the process. He is just going through it, so he is really shy right now to understand that...but, I think we got a lot out of them [discussions)...to understand that we wanted him...and I think that was very important to talk about, and when I was pregnant I had written a journal...we wrote one for him at the time that I was carrying him. And so we went through that and we talked about all of the feelings...and the positive things...and he asked me questions about the negative things...I had a caesarean and why I had that. (Interview with parent, Jessica, partner of Greg)

Jessica's partner, Greg mentioned a discussion he had with their son.

> *...the more beneficial part [of the PSE programme) was just being able to talk about some of those things...especially things with the family...things that he may not have even thought about or knows because there's some things that happened when he was very young or even before he was on the scene that...you know...how the family came together. We've been together for 25 years. He's only 13. So, there's lots of things that have happened prior to his being born and after that he wouldn't remember. (Interview with parent, Greg)*

Diane, a Canadian mother talked with me about the very personal discussion she and her daughter had.

> *...the part that I would say I got most involved with would be probably family planning because she [my daughter] really related to that...here she has a twenty-five year old brother and she's fourteen, so there was almost an eleven year difference. And that was quite fun...not because we haven't talked about it before...and she was really anxious to participate in that ...and I guess she would relate it to that some children are wanted and some are not. It doesn't matter...and I said 'how does she feel?' And it's all very positive and then, of course she wanted more intimate details...like why did it happen and after so many years. I said 'well, there is no rhyme or reason'. She wanted to know if it were a mistake...and in the beginning I thought it was...so, I mean that intimacy was welcomed...I didn't mind at all...how there was no difference in love between the children no matter how much the ages were. And, then of course...we talked about their [she and her brother] relationship which of course, has always been a very positive one. You know...and I said to her 'it's almost like raising two only children' and all that was on a very positive phase. But, that was the one [PSE topic] of the things she really wanted to relate with...(Interview with parent, Diane)*

The Challenges of Discussing Sensitive Topics

Parents and their adolescent children in the study felt that it was helpful to have an 'ice breaker' to initiate discussion on personal and sensitive topics and even with less sensitive topics, like friendship for example. It is important to consider the possibility that 'communication patterns not only differ between subjects but also within subject' and that 'even within one specific health topic, communication can vary tremendously between families' (HEA, 1996: 9).

Although the majority of IM families described themselves as 'close' and 'very close', they acknowledged that it was not always easy for them to begin a discussion for a variety of reasons. Surprisingly, many parents felt that they needed an excuse to have serious, deep discussions with their children and that using the PSE programme as a vehicle was helpful because it 'forced' discussion. This finding raises important questions. Why do families who describe themselves as 'close' and 'very close' find it challenging to communicate? How do the families in the study define closeness? Do IM families find it as challenging as non-IM families to discuss some topics?

A Swedish female, Annika spoke about the value of having the PSE programme to initiate discussion.

> *...we do talk about things, but it helps to sort of have something to introduce the conversation ...it is easier to go talk to her[my mother] again now that we sort of broken the ice about the topic. (Interview with student, Annika)*

A Canadian mother, Sherry had this to say about 'sensitive topics':

> *...I think that if it is sensitive, then all the more reason to have it there [in the PSE programme]. If something's sensitive, then it means it should be discussed. Don't you think? (Interview with parent, Sherry)*

Another Canadian mother, Margarite admits:

> *...It was interesting because there were things that we'd never talked about...had we not done this project together. I was pleased to have the excuse, you know ...(she laughs) (Interview with parent, Margarite)*

Other mothers had similar views.

...It forced the...you know...the discussion...which is good. Sometimes we [the family]do discuss on our own free time, as well. But, like...some of these topics [PSE programme topics], it's not always easy to just bring them out. (Interview with parent, Monique)

...so, this forced us [my son and me] to talk about the important topics, which are important in the long run. Then, I would also get to know how he thinks. (Interview with parent, Helena)

A female student, Nicola identified what she considered an advantage of working together with parents during the course.

> *...if your parents want to tell you something, it's easier for them...you know...if it's supposedly an assignment and then I [the parent] can say... '**yes**, a way to tell them' ...They've [the parents] been waiting all this time... (Interview with student, Nicola, daughter of Ingrid)*

Nicola thought this could work for the teenagers, too.

> *...Because you can't just go up to your mom and say something like... 'what do you think about pregnancy?' without them getting all of a sudden... 'what's going on, huh, what?'...you know, and then it's all, uncomfortable. But, this way, it's just... you know...we got this thing [home assignment]...here it is... all laid out... (Interview with student, Nicola)*

A Danish student, Nikolas spoke about the importance of both adolescents and parents being open to the idea of discussing sensitive topics, like HIV prevention.

> *...Well, it depends on what relationship they had with their parents...but,I don't think in general people are embarrassed with their parents. I thinkthat it depends equally on as much the parents attitude toward it, too...ifthey want to talk about it... (Interview with Nikolas, son of Benedicte)*

Focusing on an assignment and not directly on the adolescents themselves facilitated discussion between parents and their teenage children.

> *...I think that it would generally be a good tool for dialogue. I would imagine that in some family circumstances it made it easier for the child to open the topic by saying 'I've got this assignment...'...not so much I have been thinking about this on my own initiative, but...or 'dad, I know you are uncomfortable, but this is an assignment'. Obviously, I think after the parents have talked with their kids once or twice about a topic...it is so much easier to go back and revisit it. (Interview with parent, Steven)*

Greg had similar views

> *...We might bring them [sensitive topics] up, but I'm not sure that we would ever get into any kind of a meaningful discussion about it because you start getting those one word answers back. But, that format [PSE assignment] kind of stimulates, it poses a question. We don't have to pose the question because it's right on the sheet. And it just sort of acts like a catalyst for the conversation. It talks like a clinical discussion because it's an assignment...because it's there...as opposed to us initiating that conversation about the particular topic and he just tunes out...(Interview with parent, Greg)*

At one point during the interview, Nicola mentioned that she can talk with her mother and older brother who is nineteen years old about sex education topics, like pregnancy.

> *...and so with your mother...it's a bit different because, you know...she's been there, done it, you know? But, the thing is I can easily talk to my older brother about things like this because it doesn't matter really...and I can get his perspective on it which is almost like getting my dad's perspective except you don't get the 'blow-the-top' thing....cause he [my bother] is protective of us, you know... (Nicola)*

I then asked: *'when you talk to your brother you said it doesn't matter...what did you mean?'* and Nicola replied:

> *...you don't feel as uncomfortable [talking to older brother] because your father...it's immediately like you're going to this person who's completely distant from you...I mean...not in that sense...in age. And my brother that's 19, it's only 5 years difference which isn't that much in the long run. And then at least you've got that perspective...(Nicola)*

The preceding extract from Nicola raises issues. There appears to be concern from students that parents may overreact and/or that the generation gap between them and their parents hinders communication about sensitive topics.

Dede remarked that her decision to participate in the PSE programme/study was influenced by her wish to bridge the generation gap between herself and her daughter.

> *...Basically I guess it goes back to the thing of this age. And it's funny...like when you're growing up you always think... 'oh, when I have kids, there'll be no generation gap between me and my kids.' And as time goes on, it just happens ...whether...no matter how you try and maintain these open lines of communication...it still happens. (Interview with parent, Dede)*

Karl, a Danish father spoke about the advantages of working with his daughter during the PSE programme.

> *...Well, I think I'm...the way you suddenly see all the aspects...all the sides of your child...and also to get some talking, so that one is forced to discuss...is quite good. (Interview with father, Karl)*

Two of the PSE topics dealt with the sensitive topics of HIV prevention and planned parenthood issues. These topics were areas that both parents and their children acknowledged as difficult topics to discuss with each other, especially to initiate a discussion. This finding echoes earlier research findings that parents and their children find it complicated and embarrassing to talk about sex (HEA, 1996). Very often, it was the parent who would bring up the topic of sex when hearing something relevant on the radio or television. Parents informed me that they had discussions with their children like this. Their teenage children viewed these discussions as 'lectures'. The usual reaction to these 'lectures' was that the young people became embarrassed and cut the conversation off with their parents.

> *I guess you could say...in a sense...sometimes, you know...you're embarrassed when your parents talk about these kinds of things. Not in the sense that...you think they don't know about it...in the sense that you think it's strange that they don't think you would probably know not to do this, not to do that. Because when they go into their little lectures about it...you know...they'll hear something on the radio and they'll be like... 'don't you ever go do that.' And it's just common sense not to. Maybe the person made a mistake. You'd think they'd know me well enough to know I wouldn't do something like that. And, so then it's kind of embarrassing when they do things like that... (Interview with student, Nicola)*

I responded to Nicola *'In a way it's*...and she replied '*It's uncomfortable for them, too...I'm sure. Because they don't know quite how to tackle it.'* Ray (1994) summarises past research about positive parent support of sex education in schools and cites the work of Thomson and Scott (1991) and Frankham (1992) who claim that although there is evidence that parents may not be comfortable with their knowledge about sexual matters, there is more to consider. Ray (1994) notes:

> ...such difficulties in communication may not be simply due to a lack of information, but may be a natural part of the changing relationship between parents and adolescents. (Ray, 1994: 1)

Oscar, a Swedish student remarked that working with parents during the PSE programme helps shy students talk to their parents about sensitive topics.

> *...working with parents...I think was good because then you're not...well, some people...they're really shy to talk about sex and drugs and things with their parents, but I think that's made them more aware that they can talk to their parents about more things... (Interview with student, Oscar, son of Mareka)*

Oscar mentions that shyness is an issue for many eighth graders, including himself.

> *...I think some...ahh...some kids...there are a lot of kids in our grade [8] who are very, very shy...I don't think they would have talked to their parents about it [sex education topics]. Like umm...I just think it [working with parents during PSE course] was good because I probably got to know my parents better by doing this...because they talked more about it...when we talk normally...we talk about things that are going to happen or have happened, but we never talk about sex and drugs and things like that unless it gets brought up by someone and this...helped us...well, helped me because I was pretty shy...about my parents...they weren't shy at all...I knew that they wouldn't be, but I thought I would have been blushing or something...But, I know that I would be shy if they [my parents] started talking about it [sex], so it probably helped me... (Oscar)*

Mareka, Oscar's mother expressed her view that it is important that young people know that they can talk about sensitive topics [HIV/AIDS] at home.

> *...with this topic...especially that they [adolescents] understand that you can talk about it now at this age. Then, it's not a big thing later on. It's [being able to discuss this topic at home] a step forward, isn't it?...in a parent-child relation, I think...because it's a very sensitive topic. (Interview with parent, Mareka)*

A Canadian mother, Sherry spoke about her daughter's reaction to their discussion.

> *...I felt a lot of shyness around Becky [daughter] with this. Well, what I noticed was that I started talking about birth control...I was getting into a lot of technical stuff, right? She [my daughter] was like the 'rolly eyed, Mom bit'. You know...just, do we have to go there kind of feeling? So, that was a reflection of her shyness...(Interview with parent, Sherry)*

Susan, an American mother had a similar experience with her daughter

> *... 'Let's talk about periods'... 'I don't want to hear that, Mom...' I'm like 'Lisa [my daughter] you started your period a year ago...' 'Don't talk to me...I don't want to hear it.' (Susan laughs) She [my daughter]is very much like that. (Interview with parent, Susan)*

During the PSE programme, the eighth and final home assignment for parents and their adolescent sons and daughters to discuss was to identify the advantages and disadvantages of planned pregnancy. Several families discussed both unplanned and planned pregnancy because they found that once they began to discuss the topic, it was not difficult to continue and discuss both planned and unplanned pregnancy.

There was a development that occurred which was very significant. Six female students decided together that they would ask their parents what their reaction would be if they had an unplanned, teenage pregnancy. I overheard the students talking about this just before class began one day and I made a note in my research journal about it. I felt a bit anxious wondering how their parents would react to this. Monique brought this up when I interviewed her.

> *...It would be interesting for the parents to know more about what was said during the class as well...because she [my daughter] asked me straight away...what...how I would react if she came up and said... (Interview with parent, Monique)*

And I replied: '*She was pregnant....*' And Monique replied:

> *Yes. I said, 'well, I can't...I don't know exactly how I'd react at that particular moment...I mean...I can always say things now but I don't know if I would react exactly that way. So, she [my daughter] was not too pleased with that because some parents said, 'Oh darling, I'll help you, I'll love you. I said: 'I will love you, too, but I don't know how I will react.' It also depends on the situation...if you are a 16 year old or if you were 19 years old...if you have 10 boyfriends or if you have just one. If you love each other genuinely that will be one thing, but if you have boyfriends after boyfriends, I would react differently according to the situation. So, I cannot say no I would be really excited and I would take the baby for you or I'll chuck you out and say , 'well, you wanted that...you did it on your own. (Monique)*

I explained to Monique that students were not assigned to go home and ask their parents for their reaction about a teenage pregnancy, but that a group of female students independently decided to do this and then planned to compare their parents' responses to the discussion.

> *...I didn't want to tell her everything will be fine...I won't be angry...because I would like her to be more aware of... if it happens...it's not to be...it's not supposed to be something that is ok, it's fine, it's normal. It is not...not to me...it is not ok. So, I didn't want her to start ...think that...well, you know...whatever happens, things will be fine and I'm able to take care of everything. I probably would do everything I can to help her, but I didn't want her to start relying on this idea that...she won't be mad, yes, she won't be mad, she'll accept it. So, if it happens, well...it's no big deal. I wanted her to think more it might be a big deal. ...I didn't want to give her the comfort. It's not very nice, but it's right to teach her she has to take her own responsibilities. I mean...it's her life and because I'm her mamma doesn't mean that I need to have to cope with whatever mistakes she's done. (Monique)*

Monique concluded: *'it was a good idea actually to test the water and see what would happen. I was quite glad that this [discussion about teenage pregnancy] came up and we had to talk about that.'*

Teaching About Values, Morals, and Sensitive Topics: Who, What and When?

This section explores four questions about education dealing with values, morality, and sensitive topics. Who should teach children about values, morals, and sensitive topics? What should children be taught? When is the best time to educate children about this content? Are there any implications for IM families?

> Families and communities are the ground-level generators and preservers of values and ethical systems. No society can remain vital or even survive without a reasonable base of shared values...They are generated chiefly in the family, schools, church, and other intimate settings in which people deal with one another face to face. (Gardner, 1991: 5)

Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 197) stress the importance of there being a 'positive spiritual core' which serves as a 'foundation block' for IM children. They write that IM children need to be aware that:

> ...There is a stable spiritual core in their parents' lives and in the family as a whole. In a world where moral values and practices can be radically different from one place to another, this block is the key to true stability throughout life. When TCKs have a core personal faith and a stable set of values, they will be equipped to remain on a steady course no matter which culture or cultures they live in. (Pollock and Van Reken: 2001 197)

A Canadian mother, Diane spoke about the importance of home/school collaboration about education of a personal matter.

> *...I think it's...it's not only the role of the school, but a role of the parents to be involved in anything pertaining to the personal...family values... (Interview with parent, Diane)*

Rhonda had similar views.

> *...I don't want to assume that the school is covering that [sex education]...I feel it's the family's responsibility,* ***first (she emphasised first)*** *...And, I think that it has to come from the family first. (Interview with parent, Rhonda)*

Dunn (1988) notes the importance of the family in the emotional and social development of children and Kreppner and Ullrich (1998) concur:

> The family is an institution wherein children can learn to acquire social strategies, to solve problems, to express emotions, and to perceive and evaluate others as well as the relationships between them. (Kreppner and Ullrich, 1998: 83)

During the PSE programme, approximately 60 per cent of the 45 families (at least this number reported to me) involved other family members in the PSE topic discussions at home. In some cases, whole families were involved in the discussions. In one family with three children, the parents included their two older adolescent sons in the discussions. And, in other families, both younger and older children were included in the family discussion. One female student was living with her aunt and uncle in England due to personal family problems of her parents in the United States. She contacted her mother in the United States and discussed the PSE assignments with her mother on the telephone and her aunt in England.

In the extract to follow, Patrick, an American father spoke about what he considered the advantages of working with his son during the PSE programme. The whole family (2 parents and 3 sons) discussed the PSE topics.

> *...Well, I think it's essential because it gets, if nothing else it brings you [parents] into it. It brings the parents into the kid's life. Everyone of these issues that...they will go through at some point. If they talk about it, it will come back to them. They'll remember it. And so it gets people talking. At this age [14 years old], they really don't want to discuss sex, but if they have to...it gives the parents an opportunity to not be the ones to bring it [topic] up...'I don't want to talk about that again, Dad...' So, this was a perfect vehicle for a parent... (Interview with parent, Patrick)*

Parent-child communication about sex education topics is a complex matter. Beavet and Thompson (1996: 12) claimed that parents in their study reported 'they felt comfortable discussing sexual matters with their children but suggested that their children felt less comfortable talking to them'. However, as noted in earlier work, there are suggestions that parents may find it challenging to discuss sex education topics with their children due to changing parent-child relations during adolescence (Frankham, 1992; Thomson and Scott, 1991; Ray, 1994). Rhonda had this advice for parents about teaching their children about prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs):

> *...it's every parents' duty today...because if they're too shy to discuss this with their own child, then they are going to see their child in a coffin today...I mean...we are talking about death...You [parent] can't be shy about it [talking about STD prevention]. You have to just drop the shyness and... (Interview with parent, Rhonda)*

I replied: *'I think HIV and AIDS helped in that way...to help people say, I have to talk about this....'* Rhonda then remarked:

> *...in a morbid sense...it has...forced them to speak openly...and we are hoping it has forced a lot of people to speak openly...you are working with a lot of different cultures [in the international school community] and as you know a lot of it depends upon the culture as well. Some cultures just don't speak about sperm and babies and AIDS and maybe they expect you as a teacher to cover that so...I don't want to assume that the school is covering that... (Rhonda)*

One week during the PSE programme, students were given red ribbons symbolising World AIDS Day. A Canadian mother, Diane mentioned an incident that occurred at home when her daughter came home wearing the red ribbon.

> *...my husband would be dreadful about talking about AIDS. There's no question. Actually, there was a funny...I can't really recall when she [our daughter] came home with the ribbon...and my husband said to her 'take that stupid thing off' and of course...and I said 'no, there's a cause for this' and so there was lots of jokes, but typical of my husband to say 'they're all going to die anyway'...that is the age...and, of course...she stood up for herself and had information which was good and of course...I said 'well, you know...these are the things you have to be aware of and you have learned a lot from this...it doesn't just happen with homosexuals...and all those kinds of things.' But, there you go...a man in his fifties...you know, being that way...which isn't a humorous way, but it really isn't funny to a fourteen year old. So, there was something negative about that. (Interview with parent, Diane)*

The preceding extract supports earlier research noted by HEA (1996: 13) that 'talking about sex and the body is a sensitive issue in general and particularly in the family'. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER, UK) noted that 80 per cent of parents reported that they felt confident in talking with their children about sex related topics, discussion of the topics HIV/AIDS and homosexuality are often problematic areas for parents and their children to communicate about (NFER, 1994).

In the extract to follow, a Canadian mother, Jane emphasises the need for schools to work closely with parents in education involving morality, sensitive topics, health and safety.

> *...I feel that any programme that deals with the health and safety of children, nutrition, anything dealing with the spiritual or moral development of children...attitudes and values...and often I feel this is an area that is overlooked, in a sense...and parents are not asked or there are no programs devised with assistance or guides for teachers to involve parents. I think that's an area which needs a lot of work. The area of sex education for children is another one that does need quite a lot of focus and co-operation between home and school...just what concepts or what information is being given at what level? I know we sign forms to permit children to be given access to health talks by the visiting school nurse and showed videos and taking part in discussions, but actually what goes on in those levels often parents are not aware of. (Interview with parent, Jane)*

Jane raises important questions. How and what should be taught? When is the best time for specific topics to be introduced to young people?

According to the NFER (1994) report, schools in the UK reported that they had consulted with parents about sex education programmes at school. However, there were discrepancies as 73 per cent of parents in the survey reported that they were not consulted by schools (NFER, 1994: 29). Initially, schools were surprised with the discrepancy, but then recognised that they mistakenly conflated informing parents with consulting parents (NFER, 1994).

Jane also mentioned the time her son who was in seventh grade attended a talk at school (in Canada) about AIDS. She recalled that an AIDS patient visited the school and talked with the students about *the 'bad effects of sexual activity'* and *'transmission of AIDS'* and about using condoms.

> *My twelve-year-old was given a florescent yellow condom to bring home. I didn't know they were florescent at that time, so I learned something. He [the AIDS patient] used street language, he wasn't an educator and he wasn't particularly well educated. I saw the point of what was being done, but the parents in the community...and it was a fairly conservative West Coast Newfoundland community... 25,000 people were very upset and many parents bombarded the school board with their discontent...there were letters in the newspaper. We weren't consulted as to specific content of the programme and definitely most of us felt that if something were being explained that the proper terminology should be used and not street language. I wasn't supportive of the fact that my twelve year old brought home a florescent condom. So, in situations like that, there definitely has to be more home and school rapport. (Interview with parent, Jane)*

The NFER (1994) found that parents want to be involved in the decision making process not only about what sex education content is taught, but who is teaching and what teaching methods will be used. In addition, parents want assurance 'that the sex education programme is taught in a way which is sensitive to home circumstances' (NFER, 1994: 4).

In the study, there was a difference of opinion among parents as to when to teach and discuss important issues and sensitive topics. This finding supports earlier research outcomes which suggested that 'parents considered that there was an "appropriate age" for talking to children about sex and the body, however, parents and children were uncertain about what the appropriate age was' (HEA, 1996: 13).

> Parental need for support and information does not diminish as children grow, but needs change. Parents need support with regard to the stage at which particular aspects of health related information should be introduced and, in some cases, guidance as to how particular topics should be tackled' [sex education] (HEA, 1996: 10-11).

Several parents clearly thought their children were behind other children their age in other environments. They also felt sex education topics were too remote and not very relevant for their teenage children now. Joanna, an American mother remarked:

> *...I think the eighth graders [at this school]...I see him [my son] and his friends, and I know they're interested in sex and they're interested in girls...but, it's not...they don't seem to be as into it as American kids their age...it just seems like these kids are further behind...are not as interested or...you know...I don't know... (Interview with parent, Joanna)*

Margarite had similar views.

> *...ahh...that [planned pregnancy assignment] seemed very different...I mean...from the other topics that had come along and I thought this would...I couldn't understand why that would have been thrown in. I mean, I think my son is very young to even be thinking about girls...I mean sex and things like that...well, I mean yuck, forget it...we're into cartoons and ...I wouldn't say innocent...we are not innocent, but this just isn't on the horizon. So, although...I must say I think he found this [assignment] quite straight forward, he didn't get bogged down with it. Something's right...wrong...good...bad... (Interview with parent, Margarite)*

Margarite and I then talked about the assignments about friendship and she said:

> *...that is what they are living. And 'this[sexuality issues]...it is not part of their lives yet, or hopefully it isn't...I mean, I don't think it is at this age...But, I am not saying that it is good or bad...I mean, I think that it was probably good...if you had asked me...I mean...to be aware. It doesn't hurt to be aware of things. (Margarite)*

Based on child and parent reports, it has been suggested that 'parents often misjudged the right age' to discuss sex related topics with their children (HEA, 1996: 13).

Other parents disagreed, one such parent replied:

> *...Well, these are such important issues...every single one of them... ..friendships, getting along with people...I mean, the sexually transmitted diseases, the unplanned pregnancies...such important issues...and they are definitely things they should be thinking about at this age...and things the parents should be thinking about at this age. They should be very aware and very involved in their kid's lives. Some parents don't even know where their kids are, you know...they don't even know how they get somewhere...what time they are going to be home...It has been a real eye opener to me...a lot happens at this age. (Katie)*

Rhonda spoke about the discussion she had with her daughter about prevention of sexually transmitted diseases during the PSE programme.

> *...And, so, when we discussed that today it's not only a girl and a boy fooling around without a condom and maybe getting pregnant...it means fooling around and maybe dying in ten years...fooling around having a baby and seeing the baby die after two or three years old. So, I discussed with her that it's...it's a scary world today. (Interview with parent, Rhonda).*

Rhonda remarked to me that she hopes her daughter is not sexually active for a long time. However, she felt strongly that she needed to have this discussion now with her 14 year old daughter... *'I'm trying to be open because there are a lot of fourteen year olds who are sexually active'.*

Conclusion

As evidenced in this thesis, international mobility challenges IM families as a whole and IM children who grow up 'on the move'. Experienced at employing tactics to manage transience, the IM families in my study viewed their participation in the PSE programme as an opportunity to strengthen their families further and to manage key family dimensions in the areas of communication, cohesiveness and coherence. Participation in the PSE programme facilitated parent-adolescent communication at a critical transitional stage as IM teenagers move toward adulthood. IM teenagers may

well experience complex emotional and social upheavals which can be explored through PSE interventions like those deployed in this study.

The findings of Chapter 7 illustrate how international schools can support IM families (inclusive of IM fathers) personally, emotionally and socially through a home-based, interactive educational programme. Home-school partnerships of the type employed in my study, recognise the value of learning within the family and the home and demonstrate how families and schools can form a 'shared community' in practice.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS: THE COMPLEXITIES OF MANAGING TRANSIENCE

Introduction

Writing the final chapter of a thesis is a daunting task. It is this chapter which has to pull the threads of the narrative together; it is this chapter which has to synthesise and analyse the study as a whole. Thus, in introducing my final chapter I want to start by reflecting on the broader social and economic landscape in which my work is set. I want to do this for two main reasons; first, this setting is specific and particularistic and thus worthy of investigation in its own right; second, it is likely that the phenomenon of the internationally mobile family is set to increase.

My point is that as globalisation continues to accelerate, more and more individuals and families will need to relocate, sometimes on a temporary basis, sometimes more permanently. Waters (1995) says that globalisation is a:

> ...social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding. (Waters, 1995: 3)

In these globalising times of highly internationalised markets, it has been argued that the labour market will re-align itself in terms of a centre-peripheral model (Hutton, 1996). Thus, key workers with desirable flexible skills will move to where the work is – highly skilled experts will move and relocate as dictated by the needs of global markets. Increasingly, their families will accompany them. Alongside this group, there will be other internationally mobile constituencies; the diplomats, bureaucrats, missionaries, the military.

My study has concentrated on a particularistic group of IM families; highly skilled, educated, middle-class families who (at the time of the study) were located in the UK. What I have focused on in this work has been the process of managing transience

within the family through deploying the resources of positive parenting as well as from what is offered by the international school.

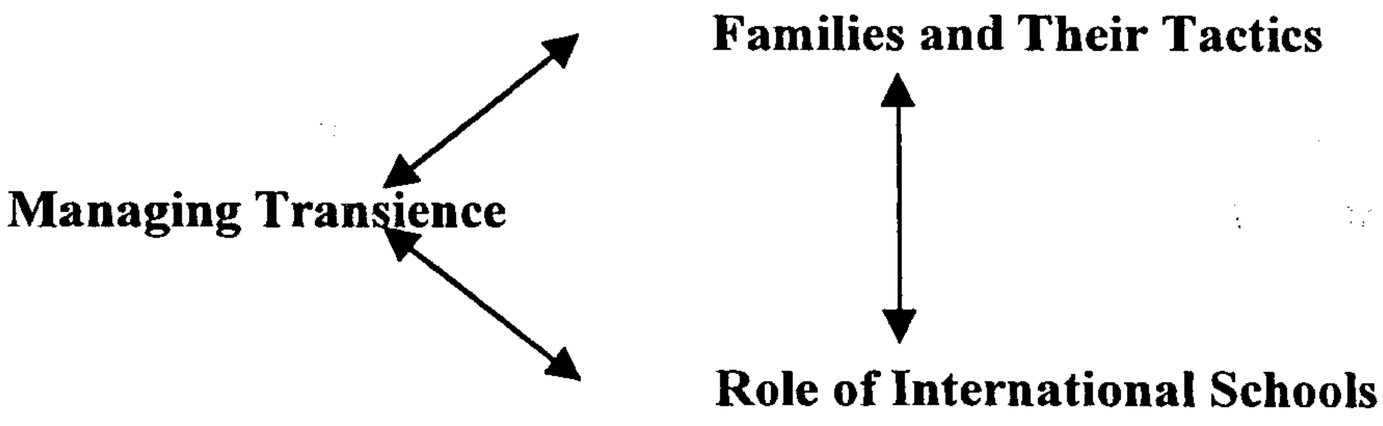
At the heart of this thesis is a recognition that transience is an on-going process which constantly plays a part in the lives of those families which are internationally mobile. At times, transience is difficult to deal with but at the same time and somewhat contradictorily, it can offer cultural and emotional advantages and opportunities for growth. The point here to note is its ambivalences, its lack of closure and its uneven trajectory. For this reason, in the thesis, I have chosen to speak of the strategies and tactics which families deploy to 'manage' transience but it is important to state that in this management there is no final position, no end-point where transience is achieved or eroded. Rather, the IM family is caught up in a powerful and dynamic process which has to be struggled with, negotiated with and constantly revisited in these global and globalising times.

The findings of my study contribute to the literature on relocation and transience of IM families in the following ways. First, much of the large volume of literature on the topic is outdated and frequently pathologises these families, and may not reflect the resilience of IM families or the world we live in today. The key themes that emerged from my systematic coding of the data offer a lens to understand in more depth the experiences of contemporary IM families. Second, my study focuses on the family as a whole and examines the family experience in a social context of international mobility whereas other studies have focused on IM children individually or IM women and have neglected to address the systemic nature of families. Boss (2002: 21) writes '…the system is greater than the sum of its parts' meaning that in order to obtain a fuller picture, it is critical to examine the family as an 'aggregate of particular relationships and shared memories, successes, failures, and aspirations'. Third, the IM mothers in my study were not relied upon solely to report the views of their partners and children which has been a practice in other family studies because of the increased availability of mothers (Gelles, 1995). My study starts to provide a 'voice' from IM fathers and their adolescent children as well as mothers. Fourth, my study focuses on

the key role of international schools and examines the interdependent relationship between international schools and IM families in managing transience, which has not been explored in depth using qualitative methods.

While the landscape of globalisation has positioned the families in this study in a particular manner, what they do and have done in the light of transience has been at the heart of my study and will now be considered in a schematic way. In what follows, I want to draw together the main themes and findings which have emerged from my work. Figure 1 represents the three key themes of the thesis as a whole and the relationship between them. The remainder of this chapter reviews these three themes in some depth with the theme of 'Families and Their Tactics' forming the middle and longest section of this concluding chapter.

Figure 1



Managing Transience

It is important to state at the outset that the degree of transience experienced by IM families may vary a great deal. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, some families in the study had experienced brief tours away from their 'home' country and culture (if there is one for the entire family) lasting one to two years while other families have experienced high levels of transience, with one family in the study moving eighteen times in a fourteen year time period. So, while Pascoe (1994: 150) claims that there are 'professional mobile children' who become skilled in managing change, I found that there were some 'professional mobile families' in my study who had developed some mastery in managing relocation and transience. My sample included some families who were living in a continual transient state whereby a transient lifestyle

became a 'way of life'. A Brazilian mother in my study whose family were about to move for the eighteenth time, Maria, spoke of her family's international mobility as '*It is our life*'.

Transience may play out in a variety of ways. In my study, many of the IM families experienced transience as they moved from place to place. There were other IM families who had lived in England for a longer period of time, in some cases five to ten years or longer. Under these circumstances, IM families were challenged by high turnover in the international school community. McCaig notes: 'There is something very painful about the dynamic of being left, because you don't have the excitement' of moving to a new place 'to help you through the transition' (qtd. in McCluskey, 1994: 11). IM families who are 'left' do not have this luxury!

Transience and the changes associated with relocation and living an IM lifestyle set in motion a series of pressures or strains that may affect many aspects of an individual's or group's well being as well as group dynamics. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the ways in which both family tactics and the international school play their part in 'managing' transience.

Families and Their Tactics

> How the family perceives the event or situation that is happening to them is critical in determining the degree of stress experienced by the family and the outcome (i.e., crisis or coping). What seems stressful to one family may not be stressful to others. How the family views an event also determines how they cope or what alternative (if any) they see for resolving the problem. Some families endure, and some overcome. Why? (Boss, 2002: 59)

When experiencing pressures or strains, healthy functioning families work to restructure and strengthen themselves as a family unit. It is critical for IM families to 'make changes in their existing structure which may include modifications in established roles, rules, goals, and/or patterns of interactions' (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983: 22). When confronted by transience, individual family members and

whole family units may experience challenges to their identity as well as to their emotional and social stability.

The IM families in my study used a variety of tactics in managing transience. They pulled together like 'strands of steel bound together in one huge cable to hold up a suspension bridge' (Boss, 2002: 21) deliberately increasing their cohesiveness in an attempt to adjust to the new location and manage transience which 'indicates a willingness of the family unit to provide a sense of security and meaning in a new situation' (Hausman and Reed, 1991: 255). Families increased their strength, decreased their feelings of insecurity and created opportunities for growth by doing activities together as families as well as by spending time with other IM families they have met in the international school community. Spending time with other IM families in the international school community may increase the number of adult role models for IM children which Lykins (1986) and Pascoe (1994) suggest, creates a 'surrogate' extended family for IM families in the absence of their extended biological families. Other ways IM families in my study increased their strength and cohesiveness was to eat meals together and have discussions at these times. A Brazilian student whose family had moved eighteen times mentioned that her family holds meetings which she called *'round table'* discussions twice monthly.

Flexibility is also critical to the adjustment process. Boss (2002: 62) notes that families need to be able to 'sway in their structure' to meet demands or strains in a continual process of 'negotiation between the family's pressures and supports'. For example, in the sections below I discuss how transience affects the IM mothers, fathers and children in the study and how they work to deploy individual and group (family) tactics in managing transience.

IM Mothers and Spouses

In the literature, IM women are usually described as 'trailing spouse(s)' who have relocated with their partners leaving the security of their 'home', extended family and friends and very often their professions as well (Pearce, 1998: 57). Classic, but

outdated studies have portrayed these women as 'victims' plagued by depression who had sometimes succumbed to drug addiction. The findings of my study, however, challenge this image of IM women. There are major gaps in the literature about how IM women and IM families with intact self-concepts manage relocation and transience and even thrive while living an IM lifestyle. Although IM women are perhaps, in a physical sense, 'trailing' their partners, this label seems to imply an image of passivity which, for the women in my study, was not the case at all. Both 'trailing spouse' and 'victim' labels significantly underplay the key role IM women play in helping their families manage transience.

The women in my study were strong with healthy self-concepts. They played a key role as the emotional and social caretakers of their families. They used a variety of tactics to help their children deal with the relationship issues of transience and created social lives for their partners and themselves. An Italian mother, Raphaella 'coached' her son how to 'fit in' at his new school explaining to him that *'...American children and Japanese children [at the international school] behave in a different way. So, you need time to sort of look and...what is going on, and then you adjust...personality...'*. Many of the IM women established a support network and worked to build a life that had meaning and purpose. As an American mother, Denise noted, most IM mothers left their careers when they moved with their families and became involved in the international school because *'It's their way of feeling good about themselves'*. Some women referred to their IM lifestyle as *'reality'* and *'that's the way life is'*. There was an acceptance of an internationally mobile life and an objective attitude that there are 'gains' as well as 'losses'. Many of the IM mothers spoke about the challenging process of becoming more independent and self sufficient without the assistance of their extended families and old friends as they relocated from place to place. They spoke openly about the challenges and frustrations they experienced when living and raising a family overseas. McCluskey (1994) writes:

> Parenting internationally brings with it its own set of issues, problems, and opportunities- some of which are true for parents anywhere, some of which are specific to the internationally mobile lifestyle. (McCluskey, 1994: 5)

Some of the IM parents learned that they were not be able to rely on advice from their extended family and friends who were not experienced in raising children overseas. They reported very close relationships with their children which they thought would not be the case 'back home'. IM mothers were more likely to deal with parenting issues because they were more involved with the children on a day-to-day basis due to IM father absence.

IM Fathers and Spouses

The complexities and pressures of being an IM father and spouse are conspicuously absent from the literature at large. Many IM fathers travel internationally and are absent from their homes for substantial periods of time which consequently has meant that participating in a research study has been in many cases impossible for them. My challenge was to secure as many interviews with fathers as possible. Of the 90 interviews conducted during my study, only 9 fathers were available for interview. In some cases, the IM mothers acted as 'gate keepers' (Seidman, 1998: 39) who guarded their busy partner's time. However, despite high work demands, the majority of the IM fathers (approximately 85 per cent) worked with their children during PSE programme.

The fathers in my study were talented, executive managers for international corporations. The frequent absence of these IM fathers from home necessitated changes in the role of IM mothers as well as changes in family dynamics leading some IM mothers to feel like a '*single parent*' as noted by Lynn, an American mother in the study. IM mothers needed to spend large amounts of time with their children, especially after school and on weekends due to the absence of their partners. I have referred to this phenomenon as 'time bound' when the women and their children are 'bound' together. IM fathers usually experience time pressures similar to non-IM parents who are single parents and families with both parents working. Hochschild (1997) refers to these time pressures as a 'time bind' which occurs when job responsibilities place demands on parents requiring them to spend more time at work and less time at home with their families.

IM fathers spoke about how international mobility and their careers impact their families describing their struggle to have family time and to support their children. A Dutch father, Frank remarked that his involvement in his children's education allowed for some '*diversification in his life'*, so that work did not totally monopolise his life. However, Frank described an underlying 'tension' which caused him to make difficult choices: *'it...[involvement in child's education] takes you away from work...very often you have to make the choice between going to work and doing something for school and you have to make the choice to go to work'.* An American mother with three sons, Sally talked about her partner's absence from the family and the struggle she and her partner have had dealing with this value conflict which has affected their ability to spend time as a whole family. Sally spoke of her sons' *'disappointment of their dad not being there for this...of for that...not ever being able to come to their sports after school'.* Sally remarked that families *'can't compete with power...achievement'* as she referred to the international corporation which employs her partner.

In my study, father absence did not mean non-involvement. This finding problematises some of the assumptions and interpretations which have featured prominently in the literature about father involvement in their children's lives prior to the 1990s. On this issue, Dienhart (1998) writes:

> Traditionally, this literature has compared and contrasted men's parent-child interactions with that of women, and concluded that men are generally less involved and are deficient in their ways of interacting. (Dienhart, 1998:29-30)

Although I should stress, once more, the small numbers of fathers interviewed in my research, there was no evidence that fathers were less interested than mothers in their children's development. Indeed, evidence pointed to the contrary; a majority of fathers managed to work with their children on at least one or two of the eight PSE assignment discussions. In addition, IM mothers communicated with their partners who were absent from home about the content of PSE discussions with the child when they returned from business travel. Some of the fathers in my study felt more able or

experienced what researchers refer to as a 'sense of efficacy' (Harold and Eccles, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997) in contributing to their children's development at the secondary school level. Fathers viewed their role as 'advisor', 'teacher' or 'technical support' person in family oriented educational projects.

IM Children

Although transience affects IM families as a whole, IM children are especially challenged by transience and its effects on their 'roots', their 'sense of belonging' and their concept of 'home'. Piet-Pelon (1994: 53) notes that IM parents 'risk raising children who rather than being at home everywhere, are at home no where' which represents a 'deficit' version of IM children. 'Global nomads' and 'Third Culture Kids' (TCKs) often enjoy but at the same time, may be challenged by their delicate and complex root system. Their 'roots' and 'home' may be more relational than geographical, meaning they are emotionally 'rooted' to their families and other global nomads or TCKs more than, or in place of, a geographical place. A Swedish mother, Helga remarked that many IM children *'...don't feel really much at home because they have so many homes...they've lived in so many countries...'*. Helga suggests that the *'family tends to become their home or their root...they're rootless in a geographical sense'*. A French Canadian mother, Margarite had similar views about the role of the family for IM children stating that *'the family is all important...it's the anchor'*.

In the study, I found that 'roots', 'a sense of belonging' and the concept of 'home' varied amongst IM families with some IM children having a relational 'root' system and others having a mix of relational and geographical 'roots'. Helping their children establish and cultivate their 'root' system was quite challenging for the IM families in my study because the majority of IM parents had a national upbringing and in some cases, 'home' for the parents was different than 'home' for their children, but this was something the parents deliberately thought about and worked to maintain. The issue of 'roots' and the concept of 'home' may also be complicated even when the 'home' and 'roots' of the parents are the same as 'home' and 'roots' of the children as noted

by Raphaella, an Italian mother in the study. When Raphaella contemplated selling the family house in Italy, she remarked that her children became angry with her saying *'don't even think about it'* and Raphaella then realised that it wasn't *'the house in question, it's the reference point'.*

The guilt and concern of many IM parents in my study was evident. Parents remarked that children had been *'ripped out of the country they felt comfortable in'* (Denise) and *'hauled off to Britain'* (Sherry). Norma expressed her concern that her children (aged 12 and 14 years old) have moved *'five times in their very short lives'* and that *'four years is the longest they have been anywhere'.* Many of the IM parents spoke about the 'high turnover' of students at the international school. One American couple remarked that their son in the past five years at the international school had *'lost his best friend...every single year'* (Mary). Mary's partner, Jim spoke about his son having to *'recycle [his] friends every year'.* Pollock and Van Reken (2001: 302) cite their research with 'TCKs' and 'Adult TCKs' or 'ATCKs' claiming that it is: 'the cycles of separation and the loss itself that affect TCKs and ATCKs – not merely the longevity or amount' of separation and loss. An American mother, Lynn referred to the distress her children had experienced moving as *'grieving over leaving'* and stated that it was *'heart breaking'* and asked *what are we [parents] doing to them?'* Akram (1995) writes:

> In this dynamic world environment of fast paced developments, we continue to talk about the remarkable flexibility of children. Yet it is easy to emphasise the rubber band type quality they possess while forgetting that, in general, events appear to run far in advance of the ability of human beings to change and adapt to them. How much more true this must be for the children. (Akram, 1995: 39)

Lynn spoke about how her children went through the process of leaving friends and making new friends. She described a cycle of *'breaking away'* from friends when moving and then observed that her children stayed close to the family with some delay in making friends in the new location. Lynn noted that after the next move *'it takes them [my children] a little time to branch out into other peer groups'.* She spoke about her daughter's reaction when she left her best friend in Canada when the family

moved to England. Other IM parents noted that living with transience and attending an international school *'makes it easier for making friends, for bonding ... because everybody is in that kind of transient mode and they don't know how long they are going to be here...where they're going next...'* (Norma). An IM father, Jim remarked that his son has *'learned to make friends'* which he feels is good *'in the long term'* even though it has been sometimes difficult for his son to adjust in the short-term to transience. Wallach and Metcalf (1994: 92) note that IM children 'learn valuable social skills for connecting quickly with others'. Both the advantages and challenges in making and breaking friendships were evident in my study.

Parents in the study encouraged their children to talk about their feelings of separation and loss and advised their children in dealing with these issues. A Canadian mother of Indian ethnicity, Helena used meditation to help her children deal with the challenges of international mobility and transience. Helena taught her children to accept that *'apart from the soul...the most permanent thing in life is change'*. She advised her children to have a '*fluid attitude'* which she explained would decrease their feelings of sadness when experiencing separation and loss. Parents in my study also encouraged their children to keep in contact with friends they were 'leaving' and friends who had 'left' as well as encouraging them to make new friends. Keeping in contact with friends may be difficult though, because 'TCKs" and 'global nomads' may develop so many 'relationships as they or people around them habitually come and go' which may mean their relationships with others 'simply can't all be maintained' (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 132). However, they note that a positive side of the 'highly paradoxical' experience of 'TCKs' may be that they have friends around the globe who they could stay with when travelling (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001: 132).

Some IM students in my study exhibited 'nomadic' tendencies. A Swedish student, Annika looked forward to *'a chance to be somewhere else and even start a new...just sort of a change'*. Helena described her son's ambivalence about staying in one place as the family has spent five years in England, which has been the longest they have lived anywhere. *'...in a way he likes it [staying in one location] and in a way he*

doesn't like it...because I think he's got a Bohemian aspect about him...'. Pascoe (1994: 174) notes that IM children may develop a 'distinct migratory instinct'. Helena stated that her son has been asking her *'When are we moving to another place'?* Useem refers to this urge for change that IM children may experience as 'having sand in their shoe' (qtd. in Killham, 1990: 5). Some students in the study commented that living in the same place for four or five years *'seems like forever'*.

Living with Complex Dichotomies

The lives of IM families are filled with complex dichotomies. There were benefits in being internationally mobile as well as emotional and social costs. The families in my study reported an increase in family cohesiveness as a result of their IM lifestyle which was very positive for the family. At the same time, they acknowledged that family cohesiveness imposed challenges in managing the independence needs of individual family members. Some of the IM parents felt that family cohesiveness affected the ability of their adolescent children to grow up and move toward adulthood. These IM parents encouraged their children to socialise with friends instead spending all of their time with the family. IM families can be at risk of 'enmeshment' (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983: 17) if they are not able to manage the delicate balance between cohesiveness of the family and the needs for independence of individual family members.

Due to IM father absence, some IM mothers may be at risk of becoming too involved with their children to the point that they, *'don't have a life of their own'* (Helga). However, other options may also be problematic as noted by Susan who stated *'if you're not involved in the school as a parent and your spouse is out working...you really have no life'*. During my interview with Susan, she admitted that she was too involved 'at school'. There is a danger that IM women may go from 'no life' to 'no life of their own' where their lives are filled with their children and the school. Helga noted that IM women may in an attempt to *'feel needed'*, *'forget about [their] own interests... [their] own things'*. Some IM women in the study reported tactics aimed explicitly at balancing this tension. Rachel, a South African mother with two

adolescent children, spoke to me about some changes she has made: *'I'm starting to do a little more for myself and I'm working'*. There was, however, still a 'tension' or 'pull' toward her children as she explained: *'Hopefully, I'm still there for them...when they want me...you know, I come to watch the basketball games after school'*.

IM parents described their children as 'worldly' in some ways and 'behind' in other ways. For example, it is common for IM children to be sophisticated in managing international travel and speaking about complex issues in the world, but at the same time, many of the children are unusually dependent on their parents, especially the mother and siblings for security and companionship. Many of the IM parents commented about the 'sheltered' environment their children grow up in belonging to an international school community. Although some of the parents felt that growing up in an international school community was beneficial to their children because of safety and security, there were clearly other parents and students who voiced concern about the potential 'shock' of moving to another environment. Norma expressed concern that her children would be *'shell shocked'* if they moved out of the international school environment, saying that her children would not know *'what's happening'* in other less insulated communities. For example, one American student raised the issues of violence and gangs as potential PSE topics for discussion, reminding me that some of the students currently at the international school, will at some point return to live in American cities where they will no longer be 'sheltered', but 'exposed'.

The Role of International Schools in the Lives of IM Families

It is crucial that IM parents select schools for their children which provide some continuity as well as flexibility in the light of their international mobility and transience. 'Portability' of education is paramount. For this reason, many IM families choose international schools instead of nationally – based schools in the 'host' countries where they have relocated. Many international schools offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme which enables IM students to apply for entrance into numerous universities around the globe. In addition, some international schools offer both the IB and the American curriculum of study which allows IM

students to study in both programmes at the same time keeping their 'options' open. Many highly transient IM families travel the international school 'circuit', moving from school to school, because they do not know when and where they will move next. Although IM families may not have control over some of the uncertainties international mobility may bring, they can, however, exert control over some aspects of their lives. Critically, education is one such area.

International schools can play a major role in the lives of IM families becoming a 'lifeline to the expatriate community' and providing 'community centres' to fill a gap for uprooted families (Langford, 1998: 38). For many IM families, the international school 'over time and place, represents the only stable environment…' (Akram, 1995: 40). She writes:

> The impact on children of frequent geographical moves and the separations that are a consequence of relocating requires more research, reflective thought, and planning on the part of international educators. An important question is how we, as teachers, can better help them adapt to the constant changes they are experiencing and still provide them with a quality education. (Akram,1995: 39-40)

International schools are aware of the importance of home-school links in helping IM children adjust to the changes of relocation and the challenges of transience. There is also an awareness of the need to help IM parents in their adjustment as this will affect the children. International schools can offer IM families a valuable form of 'network support' which can help the families feel that they 'belong to a network of communication and mutual obligation' (Cobb, 1976: 300). The international school in my study took advantage of the large 'pool' of mothers who were able to carry out some functions at the school and the IM mothers used their involvement at the school to be 'physically present' often in an attempt to decrease their child's fears and insecurities.

International schools can support IM families through home – school partnerships of the type used in my study. Through PSE, international schools can work with IM families who are in transition by encouraging dialogue amongst IM families and the

school. In addition, parent – adolescent communication can be facilitated during a period when IM teenagers may well be experiencing complex emotional and social upheavals in relationships with their peers and their families.

Conclusion

There is value in studying what might at first glance appear to be an unusual setting and an atypical sample of families because there is reason to suppose that some of the characteristics of IM families are likely to be increasingly shared by other families. The challenges of managing transience and the role that family members and schools can play in this need to be better understood more widely. Ekberg (2000) notes:

> The impact on people's lives of a rapidly globalised world is certainly far from understood. Debates about globalization often emphasize the economy and leave out many other relevant dimensions, particularly those related to social and psychological changes in the everyday lives of people. Of special interest is the absence of children and youth as subjects of concern in worldwide debates about the dynamics and consequences of globalization. Yet, children ought to be central.(Ekberg, 2000: 5)

I hope that this thesis has made a valuable contribution toward developing this understanding and has supported the importance of children and youth in having a 'voice' in these globalising times.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AKRAM, C. (1995) 'Change and Adaptation: Children and Curriculum in International Schools' in *International Schools Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 1, 1995, pp. 39-53.

ALDRIDGE, M. and WOOD, J. (1998) (E-book) *Interviewing Children*, Chichester, New York, John Wiley & Sons Ltd. (UK).

AMBERT, A. (1997) *Parents, Children, and Adolescents- Interactive Relationships and Development in Context*, New York, The Haworth Press.

AMES, C., DE STEFANO, L., WATKINS, T., and SHELDON, S. (1995) 'Teachers' School-to-Home Communications and Parent Involvement: The Role of Parent Perceptions and Beliefs. Report No. 28.' Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, pp. 1-50.

ANDERSON, C. AND STARK, C. (1988) 'Psychosocial problems of job relocation: Preventive role in industry' in *Social Work,* 33, pp. 38-41.

ANTHONY, E. (1978) 'An Introduction to the Psychology and Psychopathology of Change' in ANTHONY, E.J. and CHILAND, C. (Eds.), *The Child In His Family*, Vol. V, New York, John Wiley & Sons, pp. 3-19.

ANTONOVSKY, A. (1987) *Unraveling the Mystery of Health,* San Francisco, California, Josey-Bass, Inc.

ANTONOVSKY, A. and SOURANI, T. (1988) 'Family Sense of Coherence and Family Adaptation' in *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 50, pp. 70-92.

BAKER, A. (1997) 'Improving Parent Involvement Programs and Practice: A Qualitative Study of Parent Perceptions' in *School Community Journal*, 7, 1 pp. 11-35.

BALL, S. (1990) 'Self – doubt and Soft Data: Social and Technical Trajectories in Ethnographic Fieldwork' in *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1990, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 157-171.

BAUMRIND, D. (1991a) 'Effective Parenting During Early Adolescent Transition' In COWAN, P., and HETHERINGTON, E. (Eds.) *Family Transitions*, Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 111-163.

BEAVET, T., and THOMPSON, J. (1996) 'Parents Talking: Sex Education in Secondary Schools in *Pastoral Care*, December 1996, pp. 11-18.

BECK, U. (1992) *The Risk Society*, London, Sage Publications.

BECKER, H. and EPSTEIN, J. (1982) 'Parent Involvement: A Survey of Teacher Practices' in *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 2, 1982, pp. 85-102.

BEIDEL, D., and TURNER, S. (1998) *Shy Children, Phobic Adults,* Washington, DC., American Psychological Association.

BEVEVINO, M. (1988) 'The 87 Percent Factor' in *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 9-16.

BLAKELY, C. and STEARNS, M. (1986) *Involvement of Parents and Citizens in Local Decision Making Under the Education Blockgrant*, Prepared for the United States Department of Education, ED Contract No. 300-83-0286, Menlo Park, SRI International.

BLUMER, H. (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism Perspective and Method*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc.

BOSS, P. (2nd Ed.) (2002) *Family Stress Management*, London, Sage Publications Ltd.

BOWEN, G. (1989) *Family Adaptation to Relocation: An Empirical Analysis of Family Stressors, Adaptive Resources, and Sense of Coherence,* Alexandria, Virginia, U.S. Army Research Institute.

BOWEN, G. and ORTHNER, D. (Eds.) (1989) *The Organization Family- Work And Family Linkages In The U.S. Military*, New York, Praeger.

BRECHER, J. (1993) 'The Hierarchs' New World Order- and Ours' In BRECHER, J., CHILDS, J., and CUTLER, J. (Eds.) *Global Visions*, Boston, South End Press.

BRETT, J. and WERBEL, J. (1980) *The Effects of Job Transfer on Employees and Their Families: Final Report,* Washington, D.C., Employee Relation Council.

BRETT, J. (1982) 'Job Transfer And Well-being' in *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 67, No. 4, pp. 450-463.

BRIAN, D. (1994) 'Parent Involvement in High Schools', Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 1994, pp. 1-36.

BROWN, A. and ORTHNER, D. (1990) 'Relocation and Personal Well-being Among Early Adolescents' in *Journal of Early Adolescence*, Vol. 10, No. 3, August 1990, pp. 366-381.

BURGESS, R. (Ed.) (1986) *Key Variables in Social Investigation*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

CHAVKIN, N. (Ed.) (1993) *Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York.

CHAVKIN, N. and WILLIAMS, D. (1989) 'Essential Elements of Strong Parent Involvement Programs' in *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 1989, pp. 18-20.

CLARK, C. (1995) 'Parents and Schools- The Issues' in *The CQ Researcher*, January 20, 1995, 5, 3, pp. 51-64, 66, 72.

CLOSE, T. (1997) 'What is Personal and Social Education?' in *Forum*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1997, pp. 89-92.

COBB, S. (1976) 'Social Support as a Moderator of Life Stress' in *Psychosomatic Medicine*, Vol. 38, No. 5, September-October 1976, pp. 300-314.

COFFEY, A. and ATKINSON, P. (1996) *Making Sense of Qualitative Data*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications.

COMER, J. (1986) 'Parent Participation In the Schools' in *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1986, 67, 6, pp. 442-446.

COLEMAN, J. (1988) 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital' in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, Supplement S95-S120.

COLEMAN, J. (1993) 'Understanding Adolescence Today: A Review' in *Children & Society*, 1993, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 137-147.

COMER, J. and HAYNES, N. (1991) 'Parent Involvement in Schools: An Ecological Approach' in *The Elementary School Journal*, January 1991, 91, 3, pp. 271-277.

CONNORS, L. and EPSTEIN, J. (1994) 'Taking Stock: Views of Teachers, Parents, and Students on School, Family, and Community Partnership in High School. Report No. 25.' Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's learning, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, 1994, pp. 1-43.

COURTMAN, D. (1996) 'The Role of Emotion in Pastoral Care and Personal and Social Development: The Emotional Curriculum' in *Pastoral Care*, December 1996, pp. 3-6.

CRIBB, A. (1992) 'Politics and Health in the School Curriculum' In RODMELL, S., and WATT, A. *The Politics of Health Education*, London, Routledge, pp. 100-120.

CROAN, G., LEVINE, C., & BLANKINSHIP, D. (1991) *Family Adjustment to Relocation,* Alexandria, VA., U.S. Army Research Institute.

DAUBER, S. and EPSTEIN, J. (1993) 'Parents' Attitudes and Practices of Involvement in Inner –City Elementary and Middle Schools' in N. CHAVKIN (Ed.), *Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society*, Albany, New York, Suny Press.

DELGADO-GAITAN, C. (1992) 'School matters in the Mexican-American home: Socializing Children to Education' in *American Educational Research Journal*, 29, pp. 495-513.

DENZIN, N. (3rd Ed.) (1989) *The Research Act – A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

DENZIN, N. and LINCOLN, Y. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, California, Sage Publications, Inc.

DIENHART, A. (1998) *Reshaping Fatherhood: The Social Construction of Shared Parenting*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

DILLON, M. (2002) www. sayno.com/dareinfo/html.

DIXON, A. (1992) 'Parents: Full Partners in the Decision – Making Process' in *NASSP Bulletin*, April 1992, pp. 15-18.

DORNBUSCH, S., RITTER, P., LEIDERMAN, D., ROBERTS, D. and FRALEIGH, M. (1987) 'The Relation of Parenting Style to Adolescent School Performance' in *Child Development*, 58, pp. 1244-1257.

DORNBUSCH, S. and RITTER, P. (1988) 'Parents of High School Students: A Neglected Resource' in *Educational Horizons*, Winter 1988, pp. 75-77.

DRAKE, B. (1998) 'Pastoral Care: The Challenge For International Schools' In HAYDEN, M., and THOMPSON, J. (Eds.) *International Education- Principles and Practices*, London, Kogan Page Ltd., pp. 146-170.

DUNBAR, E. and KATCHER, A. (1990) "Preparing Managers for Foreign Assignments' in *Training & Development Journal*, September 1990, pp. 45-47.

DUNCAN, C. (1992) 'Parental Support in Schools and the Changing Family Structure' in *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin (NASSP)*, Vol. 76, No. 543, April 1992, pp. 10-14.

DUNN, J. (1988) *The Beginnings of Social Understanding*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

EAKIN, K. (1988) *The Foreign Service Teenager – At Home in the U.S.: A Few Thoughts for Parents Returning with Teenagers*, Washington, D.C., Overseas Briefing Center, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State, May 1988, p. 45.

ECCLES, J. and HAROLD, R. (1993) 'Parent- School Involvement during the Early Adolescent Years' in *Teachers College Record*, Columbia University, Spring 1993, 94, 3, pp. 568-587.

EDWARDS, R. (1993) 'An Education in Interviewing' In RENZETTI, C., and LEE, R. (Eds.) *Researching Sensitive Topics*, California, Sage Publications Inc., pp. 181-196.

EKBERG, K. (Ed.) (2000) 'Children's Places and Spaces in the World' in *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*, Vol. 7, No. 1, February 2000, pp. 5-9.

ELLWOOD, C. (1996) 'The Matter of Values' in *International Schools Journal,* European Council of International Schools, Vol. XVI, No. 1, 1996, pp. 39-45.

ELY, M. (1991) *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles Within Circles*, London, The Falmer Press.

ELY, M., VINZ, R., DOWNING, M., and ANZUL, M. (1998) *On Writing Qualitative Research*, London, Falmer.

EPSTEIN, J. (1995) 'School/Family/Community Partnerships- Caring for the Children We share' in *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 1995, Vol. 76, No. 9, pp. 701-712.

EPSTEIN, J. (1993) 'A Response' in *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 94, No. 4, pp. 710-717.

EPSTEIN, J. (1986) 'Parents' Reactions to Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement' in *The Elementary School Journal*, January 1986, 86, 3, pp. 277-294.

EPSTEIN, J. (1987) 'What Principals Should Know About Parent Involvement' in *Principal*, 66, 3, pp. 6-11.

EPSTEIN, J. (1991) 'Paths to Partnership- What We Can Learn from Federal, State, District, and School Initiatives' in *Phi Delta Kappan*, January 1991, 72, pp. 344-349.

EPSTEIN, J. (1991) 'Effects on Student Achievement of Teachers' Practices of Parent Involvement' in *Advances in Reading/Language Research*, Vol. 5, 1991, pp. 261-276.

EPSTEIN, J. (1992) 'School and Family Partnerships' In AIKEN, M. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, (6th ed.), New York, Macmillan, pp. 1139-1151.

EPSTEIN, J. and DAUBER, S. (1989) 'Teacher Attitudes and Practices of Parent Involvement in Inner – city Elementary and Middle Schools (Report No. 32)', Baltimore, Maryland, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.

EPSTEIN, J., and LEE, S. (1995) 'National Patterns of School and Family Connections in the Middle Grades' In RYAN, B., ADAMS, G., GULLOTTA, T., WEISSBERG, R., and HAMPTON, R. (Eds.) *The Family-School Connection*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, pp. 108-154.

EPSTEIN, J., JACKSON, V., and SALINAS, K. (1994) *Manual for Teachers*: Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Language Arts and Science/Health Interactive Homework in the Middle Grades (rev.) Baltimore, Center for Research on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Johns Hopkins University.

FAIL, H. (1996) 'Whatever Becomes of International School Students?' in *International Schools Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 2, April 1996, pp. 31-36.

FALK, R. (1993) 'The Making of Global Citizenship' In BRECHER, J., CHILDS, J. and CUTLER, J. (Eds.) *Global Visions*, Boston, South End Press.

FETTERMAN, D. (1998) (2nd Ed.) *Ethnography- Step by Step*, California, Sage Publications Inc.

FRANKHAM, J. (1992) *Not Under My Roof – Families Talking About Sex and AIDS*, Avert.

FRONES, I., JENKS, C., RIZZINI, I., and STEPHENS, S. (Eds.) (1998) 'Children and Parents' in *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1998, pp. 5-7.

GARDNER, J. (1991) *Building Community*, Washington, D.C., Independent Sector, p. 5.

GAREAU, M. and SAWATZKY, D. (1995) 'Parents and Schools Working Together: A Qualitative Study of Parent-School Collaboration' in *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, December 1995, Vol. XLI, No. 4, pp. 462-473.

GAYLORD, M. (1979) 'Relocation and the Corporate Family: Unexplored Issues' in *Social Work*, May 1979, pp. 186-191.

GAYLORD, M. AND SYMONS, E. (1986) 'Relocation Stress: A Definition and a Need for Services' in *Employee Assistance Quarterly*, 2, pp. 31-36.

GELLAR, A. (1981) 'International Education: Some Thoughts on What It Is and What It Might Be' in *International Schools Journal*, No. 1, Spring 1981, pp. 21-26.

GELLES, R. (1995) *Contemporary Families- A Sociological View*, California, Sage Publications.

GERNER, M., PERRY, F., MOSELLE, M. and ARCHBOLD, M. (1992) 'Characteristics of Internationally Mobile Adolescents' in *Journal of School Psychology*, Vol. 30, pp. 215-221.

GIARDINI, A. (1993) *'The Formation od a National Identity Among US Citizens Growing UO Overseas'*, MA thesis, Stanford University, California.

GILLIS, J. (2000) 'Marginalization of Fathers in Western Countries' in *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*, Vol. 7, No. 2, May 2000, pp. 225-237.

GINN, L. (1994) *'Following Their Kids To School: A Study of Parental Involvement'*, Utah State University, photocopy, 66.

GLASER, B. and STRAUSS, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Chicago, Aldine.

GOLDBERG, E. (1980) 'Relocation and the Family: A Crisis in Adolescent Development' In COELHO, G. and AHMED, P. (Eds.) *Uprooting and Development: Dilemmas of Coping with Modernization*, New York, Plenum.

GOODMAN, R. (1990) *Japan's 'International Youth'- The Emergence of a New Class of Schoolchildren*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

GORDON, F. and JONES, M. (1990) *Portable Roots: Voices of Expatriate Wives*, Bruxelles, Interuniversitaires Europeenes.

GRIFFITH, J., STEWART, L., & CATO, E. (1988) *Annual Survey of Army Families: A Report on Army Spouses and Families in 1987,* Arlington, VA., U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

GRISWOLD, R. (1993) *Fatherhood in America*, New York, Harper Collins Publishers.

HARVEY, M. (1985) 'The Executive Family: An Overlooked Variable in International Assignment' in *Columbia Journal of World Business*, Spring 1985, pp. 84-92.

HAUSMAN, M. and REED, J. (1991) 'Psychological Issues in Relocation: Response to Change' in *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Summer 1991, pp. 247-258.

HAYDEN, M. and Thompson, J. (1998) (Eds.) *International Education- Principles and Practice*, London, Kogan Page Ltd.

HAYDEN, M. and THOMPSON, J. (1996) 'Potential Difference: the Driving Force for International Education' in *International Schools Journal*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, November 1996, pp. 46-57.

HEAD, J. (1999) *Understanding the Boys*, London, Falmer Press.

HEAD, J. (1997) *Working with Adolescents*, London, Falmer Press.

HEALTH EDUCATION AUTHORITY (HEA), (1996). *Health Promotion and the Family: Messages for Health Promotion*, February 1996, London, pp. 1-65.

HENDERSHOTT, A. (1989) 'Residential Mobility, Social Support and Adolescent Self-Concept' in *Adolescence*, Vol. XXIV, No. 93, Spring 1989, pp. 217-232.

HENDERSON, A. (1995) 'Families and Student Achievement' in *PTA Today*, March/April 1995, pp. 12-14.

HENRY, M. (1996) *Parent-School Collaboration*, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

HERTZ, R. (1997) (Ed.) *Reflexivity & Voice*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, Inc.

HESS, G. (Ed.) (1992) *Empowering Teachers And Parents- School Restructuring Through the Eyes of Anthropologists*, Bergin and Garvey, Connecticut.

HIATT, D. (1994) 'Parent Involvement in American Public Schools: An Historical Perspective 1642-1994' in *School Community Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1994, pp. 27-38.

HOCHSCHILD, A. (1997) *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*, New York, Henry Holt and Company.

HOLLIFIELD, J. (1995) 'Parent Involvement in Middle Schools' in *Principal*, 74, 3, pp. 14-16.

HOLTON, R. (1998) *Globalization and the Nation-State*, London, MacMillan Press Ltd.

HOOVER-DEMPSEY, K. and SANDLER, H. (1997) 'Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children's Education?' in *Review of Educational Research*, 67, 1, pp. 3-42.

HOOVER-DEMPSEY, K. and SANDLER, H. (1995) 'Parental Involvement in Children's Education: Why Does It Make a Difference?' in *Teachers College Record*, Winter 1995, 97, 2, pp. 310-331.

HUBBARD, G. (1986) 'How To Combat Culture Shock' in *Management Today*, September 1986, pp. 62-65.

HUTTON, W. (1996) *The State We're In*, London, Vintage.

IYER, P. (1993) 'The Soul of an Intercontinental Wanderer' in *Harper's Magazine*, April 1993, USA, taken from a speech given at Yale University, pp. 13-17.

JALONGO, M. (1985) 'When Young Children Move' in *Young Children*, Vol. 40, No. 6, pp. 57-63.

JENSEN, A. (1998) 'Fatherhood and Parenthood in Europe', paper presented at a conference on fatherhood, Fano, Italy, May 1998.

JONIETZ, P. (1988) 'The Effects of Relocation on the Family System' in *International Schools Journal*, No. 15, Spring 1988, pp. 33-36.

JOSSELSON, R. (1980) 'Ego Development in Adolescence' In ADELSON, J. (Ed.) *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, New York, Wiley.

JOWETT, S. and BAGINSKY, M. (1991) 'Parents and Education- Issues, Options and Strategies' in *Educational Leadership*, 47, pp. 42-45.

JOWETT, S. and BAGINSKI, M. (1988) 'Parents and Education: A Survey of their Involvement and Discussion of Some Issues' in *Educational Research*, February 1988, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 36-45.

JOWETT, S. (1989) 'Coping With Change- Children's Experience Of Transitions To New Educational Environments' in *Maladjustment And Therapeutic Education*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 92-98.

KEITH, P. and KEITH, T. (1993) 'Does Parental Involvement Influence Academic Achievement of American Middle School Youth?' In SMIT, F., VAN ESCH, W., and WALBERG, H. (Eds.) *Parental Involvement in Education*, Nijmegen, Institute for applied Social Sciences.

KEITH, P. and LICHTMAN, M. (1994) 'Does Parental Involvement Influence the Academic Achievement of Mexican-American Eighth Graders? Results From the National Education Longitudinal Study' in *School Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1994, pp. 256-272.

KEITH, T., TROUTMAN, G., TRIVETTE, P., KEITH, P., BICKLEY, P., and SINGH, K. (1993) 'Does Parental Involvement Affect Eighth-Grade Student Achievement? Structured Analysis of National Data' in *School Psychology Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1993, pp. 474-496.

KERBOW, D. and BERNHARDT, A. (1993) 'Parental Intervention in the School: The Context of Minority Involvement' In SCHNEIDER, B., and COLEMAN, J. (Eds.) *Parents, Their Children and Schools*, San Francisco, California: Westview Press, pp. 115-146.

KILLHAM, N. (1990) 'World Wise Kids' in *The Washington Post*, 15 February 1990, p. 5.

KOBAYASHI, T. (1986) 'The Internationalisation of Japanese Education' in *Comparative Education*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 65-71.

KREPPNER, Y., and ULLRICH, M. (1998) 'Talk to Mom and Dad and Listen to What is in Between: A Differential Approach to Family Communication and Its Impact on Adolescent Development' In HOFER, M., and NOACK, P. (Eds.) *Verbal Interaction and Development in Families and Adolescents,* London, Ablex Publishers Corporation, pp. 83-108.

LANGFORD, M. (1998) 'Global Nomads, Third Culture Kids and International Schools' In HAYDEN, M. and THOMPSON, J. (Eds.) (1998) *International Education- Principles and Practice*, London, Kogan Page Ltd., pp. 28-43.

LANGFORD, M. (1999) 'Observations on the Mobile Population of International Schools' in *International Schools Journal*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, pp. 28-37.

LAREAU, A. (1989) *Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education*, New York: Falmer Press.

LARSON, R., and RICHARDS, M. (1994) *Divergent Realities – The Emotional Lives of Mothers, Fathers, And Adolescents*, New York, BasicBooks.

LAVEE, Y., McCUBBIN, H., and OLSON, D. (1987) 'The Effect of Stressful Life Events and Transitions on Family Functioning and Well-being' in *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* Vol. 49, pp. 857-873.

LEFKOW, L. (1994) 'Cultural Confusion on a Global Scale' in *The New York Times*, 6 March 1994, p. 33.

LEITCH, M. and TANGRI, S. (1988) 'Barriers to Home-School Collaboration' in *Educational Horizons*, Vol. 66, No. 2, pp. 70-74.

LEWIS, C. and O'BRIEN, M. (Eds.) (1987) *Reassessing Fatherhood*, London, Sage Publications, Ltd.

LINCOLN, Y. and GUBA, E. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*, California, Sage Publications, Inc.

LOFLAND, J. and LOFLAND, L. (1995) *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, Belmont, California, Wadsworth.

LONDON, M. and MONE, E. (1987) *Career Management and Survival in the Workplace*, San Francisco, Jossey-Davis.

LONG, L. (1992) 'International Perspectives on the Residential Mobility of America's Children' in *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 54, November 1992, pp. 861-869.

LYKINS, R. (1986) 'Children of the Third Culture' in *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, Winter 1986, pp. 39-43.

MACBETH, A. (1993) 'School-Family Relations in the Countries of the European Community' In SMIT, F., VAN ESCH, W. and WALBERG, H. (Eds.), *Parental Involvement in Education*, University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, Institute for Applied Sciences (ITS), pp. 49-58.

MALLON, B. (1998) *Helping Children to Manage Loss- Positive Strategies for Renewal and Growth*, London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

MARCHANT, K. and MEDWAY, F. (1987) 'Adjustment And Achievement Associated With Mobility In Military Families' in *Psychology in the Schools*, Vol. 24, July 1987, pp. 289-294.

MARSHALL, J. and COOPER, C. (1979) *Executives Under Pressure,* New York, MacMillan Publishing.

MARSHALL, C. and ROSSMAN, G. (1995) *Designing Qualitative Research*, California, Sage Publications, Inc.

MASON, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*, London, Sage Publications, Ltd.

MASTEN, A., BEST, K., and GARMEZY, N. (1990) 'Resilience and Development: Contributions from the Study of Children Who Overcome Adversity' in *Development and Psychopathology*, 2, pp. 425-444.

MASTEN, A. and COATSWORTH, J. (1998) 'The Development of Competence in Favorable and Unfavorable Environments- Lessons From Research on Successful Children' in *American Psychologist*, Feb. 1998, pp. 205-220.

MATTHEWS, M. (1989) 'The Scale Of International Education (Part I)' in *International Schools Journal*, No. 17, Spring 1989, pp. 7-17.

MATTHEWS, M. (1989) 'The Uniqueness Of International Education (Part II)' in *International Schools Journal*, No. 18, Autumn 1989, pp. 24-34.
MAYKUT, P. and MOREHOUSE, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research- A Philosophic And Practical Guide*, London, The Falmer Press.

MCCLUSKEY, K. (1994) (Ed.) *Notes From a Traveling Childhood- Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents and Children,* Washington, D.C., Foreign Service Youth Foundation.

MCCUBBIN, M. and MCCUBBIN, H. (1987) 'Family Stress Theory and Assessment: The Double ABCX Model of Family Adjustment and Adaptation' in MCCUBBIN, H. and THOMPSON, A. (Eds.) *Family Assessment Inventories for Research and Practice*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin, pp. 3-32.

MCCUBBIN, H., and PATTERSON, J. (1983) *'Family Transitions: Adaptation to Stress'* In MCCUBBIN, H. and FIGLEY, C. (Eds.) Stress and the Family- Volume I: Coping with Normative Transitions, New York, Brunner/Mazel Publishers.

MILES, M. and HUBERMAN, A. (1994) (2nd Ed.) *An Expanded Sourcebook- Qualitative Data Analysis*, California, Sage Publications, Inc.

MITTELMAN, J. (*2000*) *The Globalization Syndrome- Transformation and Resistance*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

MONTANDON, C. (1993) 'The Role of the Child in the Parent-Teacher Relations' In SMIT, F., VAN ESCH, W. and WALLBERG, H. (Eds.), *Parental Involvement in Education*, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, Institute for Applied Sciences (ITS), pp. 83-86.

THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES (NFER) (1994). *Parents, Schools and Sex Education*, October 1994, Slough, Berkshire, England.

NELSON-JONES, R. (1992) (2nd Ed.) *Human Relationship Skills*, London, Cassell Educational Ltd.

NOACK, P., and KRACKE, B. (1998) 'Continuity and Change in Family Interactions Across adolescence' In HOFER, M., YOUNISS, J., and NOACK, P. *Verbal Interaction and development in Families with Adolescents*, London, Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp. 65-81.

NOLLER, P., FEENEY, J., and PETERSON, C. (2001) *Personal Relationships Across the Lifespan*, Hove, East Sussex, Psychology Press.

NOOM, M., and DEKOVIC, M. (1998) 'Family Interaction as a Context for the Development of Adolescent Autonomy' In HOFER, M., YOUNISS, J., and NOACK,

P. (Eds.) *Verbal Interaction and Development*, London, Ablex Publishing Corporation, pp. 109-125.

NORD, C., BRIMHALL, D., and WEST, J. (1997) 'Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools: National Household Education Survey', National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C.

ORTHNER, D., GIDDINGS, M., and QUINN, W. (1989) 'Growing Up in an Organization Family' in BOWEN, G. and ORTHNER, D. (Eds.) (1989) *The Organization Family,* New York, Brunner/Mazel, pp. 117-139.

PACKARD, V. (1972) *A Nation of Strangers,* New York, McKay.

PASCOE, R. (1994) *Culture Shock: A Parent's Guide*, London, Kuperard.

PASSY, R. (1999) 'Family Values and Schools' in *Pastoral Care in Education*, Vol. 17, No. 3, September 1999, pp. 21-24.

PATRIKAKOU, E. (1996) 'Investigating the Academic Achievement of Adolescents with Learning Disabilities: A Structural Modeling Approach' in *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88, pp. 435-450.

PATTON, M. (2nd Ed.) (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research methods*, London, Sage Publishing Ltd.

PEARCE, R. (1998) 'Developing Cultural Identity In An International School Environment' In HAYDEN, M., and THOMPSON, J. (1998) *International Education-Principles and Practice*, London, Kogan Page Ltd., pp. 44-62.

PERRY C., LUEPER, R., MURRAY, D., KURTH, C., MULLIS, R., CROCKETT, S., and JACOBS, D. (1988) 'Parental Involvement with Children's Health Promotion: The Minnesota Home Team' in *American Journal of Public Health*, September 1988, 78, 9, pp. 1156-1160.

PERRY C., LUEPER, R., MURRAY, D., HEARN, M., HALPER, A., DUDOVITZ, B., MAILE, M., and SMYTH, M. (1989) 'Parent Involvement with Children's Health Promotion: A One-Year Follow-up of the Minnesota Home Team' in *Health Education Quarterly*, Summer 1989, 16, 2, pp. 171-180.

PIET-PELON, N. (1988) 'Why We Worry About Raising Kids Overseas' In MCCLUSKEY, K. (Ed.) *Traveling Childhood: Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents and Children*, Washington, D.C., Foreign Service Youth Foundation.

PITMAN, J. and BOWEN, G. (1994) 'Adolescents On The Move- Adjustment to Family Relocation' in *Youth & Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1, September 1994, pp. 69-91.

POLLOCK, D. (1994) 'Swans, Ducks, And Other Valid Creatures' In MCCLUSKEY, K. (Ed.) *Notes From A Traveling Childhood: Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents and Children*, Washington, D.C., Foreign Service Youth Foundation, pp. 72-74.

POLLOCK, D., and VAN REKEN, R. (Eds.) (2001) *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

PUSKAR, K. (1986) 'The Usefulness of Mahler's Phases of the Separation-Individuation Process in Providing a Theoretical Framework for Understanding Relocation' in *Maternal–Child Nursing Journal,* Vol. 15, pp. 15-22.

RAY, C. (1994) 'Highlight' in *National Children's Bureau*, No. 128.

ROWEN, H. (1991) 'Taking It Easy in Japan' in *Herald Tribune*, 13 June.

RUBIN, H. and RUBIN, I. (1995) *Qualitative Interviewing- The Art of Hearing Data,* California, Sage Publications, Inc.

RYAN, B. and ADAMS, G. (1995) 'The Family-School Relationships Model' In *The Family-School Connection Theory, Research, and Practice*, Vol. 2, Sage Publications, California.

RYAN, B., ADAMS, G., GULLOTTA, T., WEISSBERG, R., and HAMPTON, R. (Eds.) (1995) *The Family-School Connection Theory, Research, and Practice*, Vol. 2, Sage Publications, California.

SCHAETTI, B. (1998) 'What is a Global Nomad?' in *International Schools Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, Autumn 1998, p. 13.

SCHAETTI, B. (2000). 'Global Nomads: The Challenge of Authentic Instruction' in *International School*, European Council of International Schools, Vol. 2, Issue 3, Summer 2000, p. 30.

SCHURR, S. (1992) 'Fine Tuning your Parent Power' in *Schools in the Middle'*, 2, pp. 3-9.

SCOTT STEIN, M. and THORKILDSEN, R. (1999) *Parent Involvement In Education – Insights And Applications From The Research*, Bloomington, Indiana, Phi Delta Kappa International.

SEIDENBERG, R. (1973) *Corporate Wives- Corporate Casualties,* New York, Amacom.

SEIDMAN, I. (1998) (2nd Ed.) *Interviewing as Qualitative Research- A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, New York, Teachers College Press.

SHOR, J. (1991) *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, New York, Basic Books.

SIMON, U., COOK, A. and FRITZ, J. (1990) 'Factors Influencing The Adjustment Process of Foreign School-Age Children Residing in the United States' in *International Education*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Spring 1990, pp. 5-12.

SINETAR, M. (1986) 'Relo Shock' in *Personnel Journal*, Vol. 65 No. 5, pp. 44-49.

SMIT, F., VAN ESCH, W. and WALBERG, H. (EDS.) (1993) *Parental Involvement in Education*, Nijmegen, Institute for Applied Social Sciences.

SMITH, C. (1991) *The Absentee American Repatriates' Perspectives On America and Its Place in the Contemporary World*, New York, Praeger Publishers.

SMITH, K., JOHNSON, D., and JOHNSON, R. (1992) 'Cooperative Learning and Positive Change in Higher Education' In GOODSELL, A., MAHLER, M., TINTO, V., SMITH, B., and MACGREGOR, J. (Eds.) *Cooperative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education*, University Park, PA: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, pp. 34-36.

SMREKAR, C. (1992) 'Building Community: The Influence of School Organization on Patterns of Parent Participation.' Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 1992, pp. 1-51.

SNODGRASS, D. (1991) "The Parent Connection' in *Adolescence*, 26, pp. 83-87.

SOLOMON, Z. (1991) 'California's Policy on Parent Involvement: State Leadership for Local Initiatives' in *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72, pp. 359-362.

SPRADLEY, J. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

STACEY, M. (1991) *Parents and Teachers Together*, London, Open University.

STALLWORTH, J. and WILLIAMS, D. (1982) 'Parent Involvement in Education Project. Final Report.' Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, Texas, December 1982, pp. 1-25.

STEPHENS, G. and BLACK, S. (1991) 'The Impact of Spouses' Career-Orientation On Managers During International Transfers' in *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, July 1991, pp. 417-428.

STOKOLS, D. and SCHUMAKER, S. (1982) 'The Psychological Context of Residential Mobility and Well-being' in *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 38, pp. 149-171.

STOUFFER, B. (1992) 'We Can Increase Parent Involvement in Secondary Schools' in *NASSP Bulletin*, 76, 543, pp. 5-8.

STRAUSS, A. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

STRAUSS, A. and CORBIN, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research- Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, California, Sage Publications, Inc.

STUART, K. (1992) 'Teens Play a Role in Moves Overseas' in *Personnel Journal*, Vol. 71, March 1992, pp. 72-78.

SUSSMAN, S., BRANNON, B., FLAY, B., GLEASON, L., SENOR, S., SOBOL, D., HANSEN, W., and JOHNSON, C. (1986) 'The television, school and family smoking prevention/cessation project. II. Formative evaluation of television segments for teenagers and parents- implications for parental involvement in drug education' in *Health Education Research, Theory & Practice*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 185-194.

SYLVESTER, B. (1998) 'Through the Lens of Diversity: Inclusive and Encapsulated School Missions' In HAYDEN, M. and THOMPSON, J. (Eds.) *International Education: Principles and Practice*, London, Kogan Page Ltd., pp. 184-196.

THOMPSON, D. (Ed.) (1996) *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, (8th Edition), Oxford, Oxford University Press.

THOMSON, R. and SCOTT, S. (1991) *Learning About Sex: Young Women and the Social Construction of Sexual Identity*, Tufnell Press.

TOFFLER, A. (1970) *Future Shock,* New York, Random House.

TONES, K. (1986) 'Promoting the Health of Young People-The Role of Personal and Social Education' in *Health Education Journal*, 1986, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp. 14-18.

TUCKER, C., MARX, J. and LONG, L. (1998) 'Moving On: Residential Mobility and Children's School Lives' in *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 71, No. 2, April 1998, pp. 111-129.

TUCKER, R. (1989) 'Growing Up A World Away' in *Christianity Today*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 17 February 1989, pp. 17-21.

TUNG, R. (1982) 'Selection and Training Procedures of U.S., European, and Japanese Multinationals' in *California Management Review*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Fall 1982, pp. 57-72.

TUNG, R. (1984) 'Strategic Management of Human Resources in the Multinational Enterprise' in *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Summer 1984, pp. 129-143.

USEEM, R. and DOWNIE, R. (1976) 'Third-Culture Kids' in *The Journal of the National Education Association Today's Education*, Vol. 65, No. 3, Sept-Oct 1976, pp. 103-105.

USEEM, R. and COTTRELL, A. (1993) 'TCKs experience Prolonged Adolescence' in *Newslinks*, Vol. 13, No. 1, September 1993, p. 1.

VINCENT, C. (1996) 'Parent Empowerment? Collective action and inaction in education?' in *Oxford Review of Education*, 1996, 22, 4, pp. 465-482.

WAKSLER, F. (1991) 'Studying Children: Phenomenological Insights' In WAKSLER, F. (Ed.) *Studying the Social Worlds of Children*, London, Falmer Press.

WALBERG. H. (1991) 'Does Homework Help?' in *School Community Journal*, 1, pp. 13-15.

WALKER, G. (1998) 'Home Sweet Home: A Study Through Fictional Literature, of Disoriented Children and the Significance of Home' In HAYDEN, M. and THOMPSON, J. (Eds.) (1998) *International Education: Principles and Practice*, Kogan Page Ltd., pp. 11-27.

WALKER, A. (1994) *Handbook on Questioning Children: A Linguistic Perspective*, Washington, ABA Center on Children and the Law.

WALLACH, J. and METCALF, G. (1994) 'Safe Kids, Involved Parents: The Power of Parent, School and Community Cooperation in the International Setting' in MCCLUSKEY, K. (Ed.) (1994) *Notes From A Travelling Childhood- Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents and Children*, Washington, D.C., Foreign Service Youth Foundation, pp. 92-104.

WALSH, A., and HUNT, G. (1993) *RIDE (Resistance-In Drug Education) Instructors Training Manual*, CD office Supplies, Tolworth, Surrey, England.

WARNER, I. (1991) 'Parents in Touch: District Leadership for Parental Involvement' in *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72, pp. 372-375.

WAPNER, S. (1981) 'Transitions of Persons-in-Environment: Some Critical Transitions' in *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 1, pp. 223-229.

WATERS, M. (1995) *Globalization*, London and New York, Routledge.
WEISSMAN, M. and PAYKEL, E. (1972) 'Moving and Depression in Women' in *Society*, July/August 1972, pp. 24-28.

WERKMAN, S. (1972) 'Hazards of Rearing Children in Foreign Countries' in *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 28, No. 2, February 1972, pp. 992-997.

WERKMAN, S. (1975) 'Over Here & Back There- American Adolescents Overseas' in *Foreign Service Journal*, March 1975, pp. 13-15, 30.

WERKMAN, S., FARLEY, G., BUTLER, C. and QUAYHAGEN, M. (1982) 'The Psychological Effects of Moving and Living Overseas' in *International Schools Journal*, Vol. 3, Spring 1982, pp. 55-64.

WERKMAN, S. (1986) 'Coming Home: Adjustment of Americans to the United States after Living Abroad' in AUSTIN, C. (ed.) (1986) *Cross-Cultural Reentry: A Book of* Readings, Texas, ACU Press, pp. 5-17.

WERNER, E. (1990) 'Protective Factors and Individual Resilience' In MEISELS, S. and SHONKOFF, M. (Eds.) *Handbook of early Intervention*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

WERTSCH, M. (1991) *Military Brats- Legacies of Childhood Inside the Fortress*, New York, Harmony Books.

WESCOTT, H. (1992a) Memorandum in Good Practice in *Child Abuse Review*, Vol. 1, pp. 77-79.

WHITE, K., TAYLOR, M., and MOSS, V. (1992) 'Does Research Support Claims About the Benefits of Involving Parents in Early Interventions Programs?' in *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 62, pp. 91-125.

WILLIS, D., ENLOE, W. and MINOURA, Y. (1994) 'Transculturals, Transnationals: The New Diaspora' in *International Schools Journal*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 29-42.

WINETT, R., ANDERSON, E., MOORE, J., TAYLOR, C., HOOK, R., WEBSTER, D., NEUBAUER, T., HARDEN, M., and MUNDY, L. (1993) 'Efficacy of a Home-Based Human Immuno-deficiency Virus Prevention Video Program for Teens and Parents' in *Health Education Quarterly*, Winter, 1993, 20, 4, pp. 555-567.

WINNICOTT, C. (1986) 'Face to Face with Children' in British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) (ed.) *Working with Children*, London, BAAF.

WOLFENDALE, S. (1992) *Empowering Parents and Teachers: working for children*, London, Cassell.

YIN, R. (1989) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Rev. ed., Newbury Park, California, Sage.

YOUNG, I. (1992/3) 'School Health Education in Scotland: The Health Promoting School Encouraging Parental Involvement' in *Hygiene*, Vol. XI, pp. 40-44.

Grade 8 Health Name: _____

Topic: Friendship Home Assignment: 1

"A friend is one who knows you as you are,
Understands where you've been,
Accepts who you've become,
And still gently invites you to grow."
-Unknown

Guidelines for home assignment: Identify what you or you and your parent think are the characteristics or qualities of a good friend. If you are working with your parent, discuss this first, then identify six characteristics or qualities. If you identify less than six or more than six, that's alright. Students are to write the characteristics or qualities of a good friend in the space below.

Parents: If you are participating in the study and worked with your son or daughter on the assignment, please sign in the space below:

Parent's signature : _____

*Students are to bring assignment to our next class meeting.

Thank you
Mrs. McLachlan

Grade 8 Health **Name :** _____

Topic : Friendship **Home Assignment : 2**

Once you have a good friend or friends, it is important to think and behave in ways to maintain or keep the friendship developing.

Guidelines for home assignment : Please list actions or behaviors and attitudes which would help you maintain or keep a friendship developing. I have listed two examples below- add a few more items to the list. If you are working with your parent, discuss this first and then write down your responses in the space below.

Praise and pay your friend a compliment without expecting them to return one to you.

Don't expect your friend to understand you totally all of the time.

Parents : If you are participating in the study and worked with your son or daughter on the assignment, please sign in the space below :

Parent's signature : _____

Thank you
Mrs. McLachlan

Grade 8 Health Name : _____

Topic : Values Home Assignment : 3

Values are beliefs which guide our thinking and actions or behaviors. Values help us decide what kind of life we might like to lead. Values have an effect on how we relate to and treat other people. Values affect how we take care of ourselves.

The list of values below are part of a Health value scale. Please follow the directions explained just above the list of ten values and write down which value is most important to you by placing a **1** on the line provided. Number all the values according to how important they are to you. The value that you think is the least important would have the number **10** on the line.

There are no right and wrong answers to this activity because this is your personal view. If you are working with your parent, discuss the values , then number them in order of importance. You and your parent don't have to agree. You can have two sets of numbers if you wish.

Study the list carefully and pick out the one value that is the most important for you. Write the number "1" in the space to the left of the most important value. Then pick out the value that is second-most important to you. Write the number "2" in the space to the left. Then continue in the same manner for the remaining values until you have included all ranks from 1 to 10. Each value will have a different rank.

We realize that some people find it difficult to distinguish the importance of some of these values. Do the best that you can, but please rank all 10 of them. The end result should truly show how you really feel.

_____ A COMFORTABLE LIFE (a prosperous life)

_____ AN EXCITING LIFE (a stimulating, active life)

_____ A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT (lasting contribution)

_____ FREEDOM (independence, free choice)

_____ HAPPINESS (contentedness)

_____ HEALTH (physical and mental well-being)

_____ INNER HARMONY (freedom from inner conflict)

_____ PLEASURE (an enjoyable, leisurely life)

_____ SELF-RESPECT (self-esteem)

_____ SOCIAL RECOGNITION (respect, admiration)

FIGURE 6-3. Health value scale. (*Adapted with permission from Rokeach, M. Value survey. Halpren Tests, Sunnyvale, Calif. Used with permission, from Wallston, B. S., Personal communication,*

Parents : If you are participating in the study and worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign in the space below.

Parent's signature : _____

Next Week, we will add values which relate to other people and other important aspects of life. Thank you Mrs. McLachlan

Grade 8 Health **Name:** _____

Topic: Values **Home Assignment: 4**

Guidelines for home assignment : Last week, we rated a list of personal health values in order of importance. This week, I would like you to add some values which you feel are important to your life. These values may have to do with you as a person, your family, relations with other people or perhaps world issues which you feel are important.
I will give two examples below. Please try to add six or more values to the list. If you are working with your parent, discuss this first and then write down your responses in the space below. It's fine if you repeat a value from home assignment 3.
You do not have to use special words for these values, use whatever words best describe what the value is.

A World of Beauty (Beauty of nature and the arts)

Wisdom

Parents : If you are participating in the study and you worked with your son or daughter on the assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature : _____

Grade 8 Health Name :

Topic : Country, Culture & Family Home Assignment : 5

Guidelines for home assignment : Write a paragraph describing something unique, interesting or special to you about your country, culture or family. You may combine and write about country and culture or whatever you wish. You might write about some activity your family does together or you might describe something you do during the holidays.

Don't worry if you're not sure which country is your home country. For many families belonging to international school communities, it may be difficult to decide which country to write about. For example, some people may be born in one country and live there for a very short time. You can decide what you would like to write about.

If you are working with your parent, come up with some ideas together and then write about what you and your parent discussed.

Parents : If you are participating in the study and you worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature : _____

Grade 8 Health Name : _____

Topic : HIV/AIDS Case Studies Home Assignment : 6

Guidelines for home assignment : For each of the four case studies, identify two or three options and possible outcomes of each option. Remember that an **option** is a choice and an **outcome** is what happens when a person makes a particular choice.

If you are working with your parent, discuss the case studies first, then write down your responses in the space provided.

Parents : If you are participating in the study and you worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature : _____

P.S. There are two home assignments left in our course which ends January 22, 1997 !

NAME CLASS DATE

Making Responsible Decisions

There are several steps involved in making a good decision. For each of the following problems, identify two or three options and their possible outcomes. Then indicate which decision you think is best.

1. Tanya's boyfriend has been pressuring her to become sexually involved. She really likes her boyfriend and does not want to lose him. However, she is concerned about the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. What should she do?

Option A: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

Option B: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

Option C: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

What do you think is the best choice? Explain why. _____

_____

_____

2. Andre has not been feeling well lately. He is very tired, his lymph nodes are swollen, and he has lost his appetite. Andre has just discovered that his former sexual partner has AIDS. Andre thinks he may have AIDS, too. What should Andre do?

Option A: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

Option B: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

What do you think is the best choice? Explain why. _____

_____

_____

3. James has been involved with drugs for six months. His friends are pressuring him to try IV drugs. So far he has refused, but he is concerned that he may not be able to continue to resist. He has heard about AIDS and the risk to IV-drug users. What should James do?

Option A: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

Option B: _____

Possible Outcomes:

_____

_____

Option C: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

What do you think is the best choice? Explain why. _____

_____

_____

4. Erin has a cousin who has been diagnosed as having AIDS. Her parents are worried about becoming infected with AIDS and have told Erin that she cannot visit her cousin. Erin would like to be supportive and to show her cousin that she cares about him, but she does not want to disobey her parents. What can Erin do?

Option A: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

Option B: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

Option C: _____

Possible Outcomes: _____

_____

_____

What do you think is the best choice? Explain why. _____

_____

_____

Grade 8 Health Name : _____

Topic : The Family Home Assignment : 7

Guidelines for home assignment : During the month of January, we will be having some discussions in class about the importance of the family. Please read the questions listed below and then write your responses in the space provided. If you are working with your parent, discuss the questions first, and then write down your responses.

1. The family is the basic unit in society. In addition, the family is the basic unit of our social health. Why is the family important for social health?

2. What different family forms exist today? Example : A nuclear family is one which includes a mother, father, a child or children. Try to give **two** examples. Just describe family forms which are different from the nuclear family example.

3. How do you think the family's rules prepare young people for adult life?

Parents : If you are participating in the study and worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature : _____

Grade 8 Health Name _____

Topic : Planned Pregnancy Home Assignment : 8

Guidelines for home assignment : We have a few weeks remaining in this course which will complete at the end of Semester 1. Our last topic covers planned and unplanned pregnancy. This home assignment deals with issues about planned pregnancy and information from the home assignments will be used in our classes. During our classes, we will discuss unplanned pregnancy also, particularly teenage pregnancy.

In the space below, please list some advantages of planned pregnancy. Try to identify three advantages if possible. I have listed one advantage as an example. Can you think of any disadvantages to planning a pregnancy or pregnancies? Please write down any ideas in the space provided.

If you are working with your parent, discuss this first and then write down your responses.

Advantages

Example: The spacing of children

Disadvantages

Parents : If you are participating in the study and you worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature : _____

** This is the last home assignment. Thank you for all of your hard work!

APPENDIX 2

RESEARCH TRAJECTORY

Pastoral Care, the PSE Programme and the Origins of the Study

In 1988, I was employed as the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and Teacher of PSE at the international school where the study took place. My position as Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and PSE Teacher was newly established at the school. The school administration chose to follow the British model of 'pastoral care' and 'PSE' although private, non-British schools were not mandated to do this. Drake (1998: 147) notes that 'pastoral care' is the 'broad programme of support' provided to students and that 'PSE' or the 'pastoral curriculum' serves as the formal curriculum. For purposes of this thesis, 'PSE is an active and challenging subject that can equip pupils with some of the skills they will need if they are to survive in a changing and demanding world' (Close, 1997: 92).

At that time, I was solely responsible for co-ordinating pastoral care in the school as well as creating and teaching a PSE curriculum for students in grades 5 through 9 (aged 10 to 15 years old). Lang notes that significant legislation, The Education Reform Act of 1988 mandated schools in England and Wales to provide:

> ...a balanced and broadly based curriculum that a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. (qtd. in Drake, 1998: 147)

According to Courtman (1996: 3), PSE programmes may cover 'education for health, careers, community environment, family, equality, industry, economic and legal matters'.

There has been debate about whether or not there is a distinction amongst PSE, health education and lifeskills education. Tones (1986) writes:

> At times it seems as if health education and PSE are interchangeable terms, on other occasions it would appear that health education is part of PSE, or alternatively that PSE is part of health education. (Tones, 1986: 17)

There is further blurring of these subjects because oftentimes PSE, health education and lifeskills education 'have common goals and use similar teaching methods and approaches' (Tones, 1986: 14). Although it is not the purpose of this thesis to debate and resolve the ambiguities involved in teaching of PSE, health education and lifeskills, for purposes of this thesis, the PSE programme in the study included health education and lifeskills content as part of the overall PSE curriculum. Chapter 7 of this thesis explores the perspectives and experiences of the IM families in this study who worked together during the PSE programme.

In 1988, I established the PSE curriculum and expanded it each year. I developed a PSE programme for students in grade 8 (aged 13 to 14 years old) called 'Personal Development & Relationships'. After teaching this course for a few years, I began to look for ways to improve the programme and, in 1994, I made changes to the curriculum as follows. My first goal was to make the programme as meaningful and relevant as possible for the students. Specifically, I reflected on the idea of adding a parental involvement component to the course. My second goal was to increase the peer communication and interaction in the programme through the use of more experiential teaching methods, such as working in pairs and small group activities. My rationale for using small group activities or 'co-operative learning' methods was to have 'students work together to maximise their own and each others' learning' as noted by Smith, Johnson, and Johnson (1992: 35). Close (1997) notes that teaching PSE using didactic methods are often ineffectual. He notes:

> PSE is concerned with the process, the acquisition of understanding through dialogue and debate, as opposed to simply the outcomes. It is readily apparent that active learning is the bread and butter of PSE teaching. If pupils do not see how and why ideas and opinions are formulated then they are not ready to question, challenge and apply their ideas. The teacher's role is to facilitate this active process. (Close, 1997: 91)

My rationale for changing the PSE programme was to reflect the real world of my students by including the significant people who serve as their major relationships; their parents and peers. From a pastoral care perspective, my aim was to begin moving the school toward becoming a 'health promoting school' which as noted by

Young (1992/3: 41) 'considers parental support and co-operation as central' to the scheme. I believed that using a 'co-operative learning' teaching strategy would promote a sense of community amongst the IM students in the study. Schaetti (2000: 30) acknowledges the importance of 'authentic instruction' and notes that 'instruction must be relevant to the student's life experience in order to be fully effective'. She further explains:

> This means that instruction in international schools must address experiences central to the global nomad, of which mobility and intercultural interaction are two of the most significant. (Schaetti, 2000: 30)

The PSE topics covered in the programme consisted of the following: Qualities of a Good Friend; How to Keep Friendships; Prioritising Values; Family, Country and Culture; Planned and Unplanned Pregnancy; and HIV/AIDS prevention. On a professional and personal level, I felt that teaching the programme in a traditional manner with students and teacher without family involvement was a dilemma for me as many important topics were covered in the course. Some of these topics included sensitive issues. These topics were not only school topics but were perhaps home topics as well. For example, some topics pertained to the family and culture while other topics were more sensitive in nature, like parenthood and HIV/AIDS prevention. Chapter 7 of this thesis explores the complexities involved in parent-adolescent communication of a range of topics dealing with relationships, some of which are sensitive in nature.

I was aware that I could not teach the PSE programme taking a neutral position on values. I was conscious of the fact that I come to the programme with my own personal values that are transmitted in what I say and what I do during the course. I was concerned that I would inadvertently impose my value system on my students. Passy (1999: 24) argues that there is a '…need to consider where the boundaries lie between general discussion on family values, transmission of teachers' own values and intrusion into individual family culture'. On the issue of values and health education, Cribb (1992) contends that teachers have a responsibility to be aware and sensitive to the values imposed in the teaching of health education. He writes:

> Health education is undeniably a value-laden subject. To teach about and for 'health' is apparently to threaten no-one; however to admit to an involvement in value education is to invite popular controversy and professional obstacles. It is very tempting to rely upon the surface neutrality and the positive connotations of the concept of health, but it is vital to face up to the moral and social dimension if only to be self-conscious about the substance, coherence and clarity of the values which are being promoted. (Cribb, 1992: 107)

My dilemma about teaching PSE and health education content without the involvement of families was the idea or 'seed' that eventually led to the origins of the study and grew to be the intervention in the study to include parents in the programme. Marshall and Rossman (1995: 16) note that qualitative inquiry often originates from 'real – world observations, dilemmas, and questions' and the research ideas or areas of interest come from the researcher's 'direct experience, tacit theories, and growing scholarly interests'. I used the home/school partnership in the study as a strategy for dealing with the issue of values and PSE. By involving families in the partnership, the students and their parents would have the freedom to discuss the PSE topics applying their value systems in the privacy of their homes.

My interest in 'home/school partnerships' began during the late 1980s and early 1990s when I was involved with parents working in school courses. I taught a drug education programme in conjunction with the UK metropolitan police to students in grade 6. The programme was called 'RIDE' (Resistance in Drug Education) and was developed by a metropolitan police officer and a Headteacher of a private, British school (Walsh and Hunt, 1993). The 'RIDE' Programme was modelled after the 'DARE' Program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) in the United States (Dillon, 2002). Both programmes required parents to be involved in the course by discussing 'key words' in the lessons with their children at home prior to the lesson at school.

On another occasion, one parent and I developed a 'Healthy Snack' programme for students in grade 4, their parents, and teachers. In this programme, the teachers presented an individual nutrient (vitamin, mineral or food category) in class each week. Students were encouraged to bring a snack to school that featured the nutrient

of the week. A packet of nutritional information was created which included general health information about individual nutrients as well as suggestions for food choices and recipes. These nutritional information packets were distributed to all parents and teachers of students in grade 4 as well as letter providing details about the programme.

My experiences in working with students and their parents during the 'RIDE' programme and the 'Healthy Snack' programme were positive in that I found that the students benefited from the involvement of their parents in the programme. In the 'RIDE' programme, I observed that students came to class well prepared for the lesson of the week because they had had the time to think about the 'key words' and discuss the 'key words' at home with their parents beforehand. Student participation in class discussions increased. Students were confident about their answers and they gave examples relevant to the topics based upon the discussions they had at home with their parents. Some students even quoted their parents in the classroom discussions. The students learned the content better after having worked on the content 'at school' and 'at home'. In the 'Healthy Snack' programme, I observed similar positive results as in the 'RIDE' programme. These positive outcomes were not surprising as Epstein (1991, 1995) notes that children learn better when their parents are involved in their education. Furthermore, Epstein (1995: 701) writes: '...partnerships between home/school/community are critical because they help children develop and succeed not only in their education, but in their lives as well'.

The Challenge of Multiple Roles

During the study, I functioned in a variety of roles that included change agent, PSE Teacher, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and researcher. This was a challenging experience that required me to be flexible and reflexive in these roles. I had to continually be aware of these roles before taking any action. Having multiple roles, however, was not a new experience for me. Trained as a clinical nurse specialist in wellness and health promotion, I often functioned in a variety of roles as educator, direct care provider, counsellor, researcher, and consultant. So, my past education and experience was extremely valuable to me when I conducted the study. However,

working with culturally diverse IM families was a new and challenging experience for me.

In my role as change agent, I changed the traditional approach of the programme from teacher and students to teacher, students, and parents. One of the major challenges I faced was designing and facilitating a PSE programme that was culturally sensitive to the needs of the diverse group of IM students and their families.

> Introducing an effective pastoral programme into an international school arguably poses 'change agents' with more challenges than they would face in a domestic school: the heterogeneous nature of an international student body will, for instance, necessitate a rigorous needs analysis...Indeed, the whole process of implementing a pastoral care initiative in an international school requires a great deal of sensitivity, forethought and collaborative planning. (Drake, 1998: 164)

I believed that the involvement of parents in the programme and the involvement of students in small group activities in the classroom would assist me in the process of facilitating a culturally sensitive PSE programme for the IM students and their families.

Another challenge I had to manage was that I would conduct the programme with two options, one option whereby students would work with parents on home assignments and another option whereby students would not work with parents on home assignments. Participation in the programme was required of all 8th grade students while student participation with parents on the home assignments was voluntary. I found that it was a tremendous amount of work to change the curriculum and add the parent involvement component. Scott Stein and Thorkildsen (1999: 43) note that 'many teachers feel they need more time, training, and information in order to involve families effectively'. Using a home study approach required careful planning of how and when the eight home assignments would be completed over the twenty-week term. The home assignments were developed as topics for discussion that parents and their adolescent children would complete at home. I designed six of the eight home assignments and used content from other sources for the remaining two assignments.

There were important considerations to address. The involvement of parents was not intended to be minimal in any way. However, the assignments needed to be manageable in terms of the amount of time (approximately 30 minutes) it would take to complete the assignments. Clear instructions were needed and the language needed to be basic because there were parents for whom English was a second language. Two Korean male students reported to me that some assignments took their families at least an hour to complete because of language issues. Other families in the study found the time involved in the home study programme manageable.

As a PSE teacher, I had several goals for the use of home assignments. First, I wanted to enrich and supplement the classroom work. Second, my goal was to use the home assignments as a catalyst in generating discussion at home about the programme topics. Third, my aim was to provide an opportunity for parents to be more informed about the programme and/or to be involved in the programme if they wished to do so. Lastly, participation in the PSE programme provided an opportunity for students to discuss important issues and topics with their parents.

There were issues that needed careful attention. For example, I had to be flexible with the homework policy. Homework was usually due the day after class. I changed the due dates of homework to one week (the next class time) so that students would have additional time to discuss the assignments at home with their parents. I made this change for two reasons. First, many of the fathers travel extensively for their corporations and spend a lot of time away from their families. I wanted to increase the chance for fathers to be involved in the discussions with their children. A lack of flexibility on my part could lead to unneeded pressure on the students and their parents. If students wanted to work with their father and the parent was travelling, students would be reassured that lateness in submitting the assignment was acceptable. Second, home life can be very busy for the IM mothers when their spouses are working long hours or travelling. It is common in IM families for mothers to feel like single parents due to father absence (as noted in Chapters 1 and 4). So, later due dates

for home assignments would perhaps lessen the time pressures for parents and their children to schedule time for the home discussions.

Another concern involved the students who were not working with parents on the home assignments meaning that they were not directly participating in the study. I was sensitive and careful not to alienate these students during the PSE programme. I dealt with the issue by conducting class in the usual manner without referring to the study during class time and by not making any distinction as to which students were involved or not involved in the study.

Grading for the course was based on completion of the written home assignments and participation in class discussions and group work. Home assignments were graded with 'S' for satisfactory if completed and 'U' for unsatisfactory if incomplete. This grading system was in place at the school for special subjects, like music, art, physical education and PSE. As a rule, grades were 'played down' in the PSE programme. Students who did not complete the home assignments and/or engaged in misbehaviour would receive an unsatisfactory grade for the course, but this was a rare occurrence.

As the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, I was responsible for collaborating and working with the school nurses, the counsellors, and teachers in assisting students who were experiencing personal problems as well as students at risk. A common task was to work with students and/or their families who had recently relocated to the area and assist these students to adjust effectively to the changes they faced. Drake (1998) notes:

> The development of a pastoral care programme within an international school is of very real importance. It should certainly receive as much attention as it does in any national system, perhaps more so, since many of the students in an international school are not only facing the normal challenges of adolescence but also have to deal with cultural and other forms of dislocation, often in the absence of extended family and friendship support networks. (Drake, 1998: 153-154)

Guideline Questions for Interviews

As a parent, could you describe any ways you have been involved in your child or children's school work/program? (Example: A Teacher has asked for your involvement in the curriculum of a subject, specifically an activity or assignment of some sort)

How would you describe your feelings about being involved in this program or programs?

Describe any advantages and/or disadvantages of being involved in a school program.

Could you describe any times when there were obstacles to you being involved in a school program?

If you were asked to be involved in working with your child or children in a school program, would you prefer 'at home' activities or 'in school' activities? Explain

Could you describe any types of activities/assignments which you feel would be useful, helpful, etc.?

Could you identify any subjects/topics which you would like to work with your child? Any subjects/topics which you would prefer not to be involved in?

If applicable:

As a teacher, could you describe any ways you have asked parents to be involved in a school program (i.e. parent to work with child on a particular assignment/activity)?

Guideline Questions Parent Interviews

When your son/daughter first brought the letter about the study home, how did you decide to participate or be involved?

Who did your son/daughter work with in the home assignments?

Could you describe how the process went of working together on the home assignments?

How did you feel about being involved in the course in this way?

Did working on the home assignments increase your discussions or conversations in general about any topics?

Did you find any particular assignments/topics interesting, valuable in any ways?

Do you have any suggestions for next year's course...any ideas for other topics? Anything to omit?

Did you learn anything about your son or daughter?

Were there any advantages of being involved in this way? Any disadvantages?

Were there any obstacles for your being involved? Example: Sometimes it may be difficult if one parent travels for his/her job

Are there any other ways you would like to be involved in schools? Is there anything you would prefer not to be involved with?

Can you describe any other involvement you may have had in other schools and/or when your child or children were younger?

Guideline Questions Student Interviews

When you first brought the letter about the study home, how did you and your parent or parents decide whether to participate and be involved? Did you talk about it?

Who did you work with on the home assignments? How did you decide who to work with?

What did you think of the topics?

Can you give me any examples of any topics that you liked talking about at home?

Were there any topics that you didn't like? Were any assignments difficult?

Can you think of any advantages of working on the assignments at home with parents?

Any disadvantages? Do you thinking working on these changed the way you talk in cla

Could it ever be embarassing to do home assignments with parents? Any examples?

Can you think of any topics that we didn't cover on the home assignments that you think would be good to do for grade 8 next year? Do you think parents could be involved in the course in other ways?

Sometimes it is difficult for particularly fathers to participate, can you think of any ways fathers could be involved in working on the home assignments?

Have your parents been involved with schools when you were in other grades?

How do you feel about parents being involved at school?

Group Work:

During the course, how did you feel about working in groups?

Were there any advantages or disadvantages of working in groups? Please explain.

Interview Check List

Explain briefly purpose of interview

Length of time approximately

Location : Room 202

No need to prepare ahead (mention one question deals with any past involvement)

Permission to tape and reason for this.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Information between parent and student interviews not shared

Interview

Date:

Time:

Initials or Pseudonym:

Place:

Number of children:

Ages or grades:

Nationality:

Years living in England:

Other countries lived in:

Religious preference:

Other background information:

November 2, 1995

To: [redacted] Headmaster

From: Debbie McLachlan

Re: Professional Development/PhD Program

As you are aware, I began a PhD Program at King's College/University of London in October 1994. At this point in my program, I am preparing to schedule and conduct some interviews primarily with parents and a few interviews with [redacted]. Participation in these interviews will be voluntary. My plan is to conduct approximately 12 interviews periodically before the end of this school year. These interviews will serve as a small pilot study with the main part of the study beginning with the eigth grade course in autumn 1996.

In the interviews with parents this year, I would be asking parents to describe any involvement they have had at schools when working with their children on a school assignment or project which has asked for their participation. When interviewing student counselors, I would be asking them to describe their experiences and feelings about being involved in the student counseling program.

The main aims for the study to begin in autumn 1996 include the following:

To examine the effects of parental involvement and peer education/peer counseling on the educational experience of grade 8 students learning about Personal Relationships and Sex;

To explore the effects on students' relationships/communication patterns with their parents and peer educators/peer counselors.

The eigth grade course is primarily about relationships and there is a small component of sex education toward the end of the course. We spend a lot of time on friendship issues and communication skills. Some time is spent learning about family life, infant and child growth and development. My wish is to bridge the gap between school and home in encouraging more communication at home with parents through brief, but stimulating assignments where parents and their children work together. Another possible aspect (if my eigth grade students are interested) may involve some classroom activities with peer counselors from the high school.

This study will involve an action research approach which means the study will evolve while the course is in progress. Another important aspect about action research is that the research is not done "on" people, it is done "with" people. I am very excited and looking forward to conducting this study. I believe that important information will be learned about parent/child communication and peer to peer communication which will enhance the curriculum.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is anything you want to discuss with me and I will make an appointment to see you.

Thank you

Debbie

[redacted]

Dear Parents and Students,

I am writing to provide you with some information about the Grade 8 Health Course which meets once weekly for Semester One. In addition, I will provide you with some information about a research study which I will conduct during the eighth grade course this year.

For those of you who don't know me, I am the Health Education Coordinator and Teacher [redacted]. I am an [redacted] This is my tenth year with [redacted]

The eighth grade course is primarily about relationships and personal development. Examples of some of the topics we will study in the course this semester include the following: Issues about Friendship; Important Values for Life; Dating; Marriage; Importance of Family; Risks & Consequences resulting from Drug Use; Awareness of Eating Disorders; HIV Prevention. We will learn about the social and mental aspects of health, not just the physical aspects.

Since 1994, I have been working part time on a PhD degree in Health Education at King's College, University of London. One of the aims of the study is to learn more about parent/child communication and communication among students and their peers. Another aim is to learn more about parental involvement in schools. From an educational standpoint, I would like parents to know what their children are studying during the course and also provide an opportunity for parents to be involved in some of the important topics we will study.

Participation in the study is voluntary. An action research approach will be taken which means that the research is done 'with people', not 'on people'. If you and your child are able to participate, this will mean that periodically during the course, I will be asking your child to work with you on some brief home assignments-some will involve discussion or a combination of discussion and some writing for your son or daughter to do. There will be instructions for all of these assignments. For example, one of the first assignments will be looking at the qualities of a good friend. I will be asking students to discuss this with you at home and identify six qualities. There will then be follow up in class about this. Participation could also mean that I may contact you and ask if I can interview you about how it was for you to work on these home assignments with your child. I would also interview some of the students at some point during this school year.

Please complete the form below indicating whether you and your child are able to participate in the study or are not able to participate. If you would like more information about the study before making your decision about participation, please indicate this on the attached form and I will telephone you.

All students will have the home assignments regardless of whether they are able to participate or not able to participate in the study. I do understand that some people will not be able to participate for various reasons and this is fine. At this point, I want to reassure all students and parents who are not able to participate that student grades will not be influenced or affected by participating or not participating in the study. Grading will be based on achievement on written quizzes and class participation as is usually done for the grade 8 course.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to an exciting course and school year with grade 8 students and parents.

Sincerely,

Debbie McLachlan

Debbie McLachlan
Health Education Coordinator/Teacher

GRADE 8 COURSE/RESEARCH STUDY OPTION

Please tick (✓) the response you are choosing: NAME:_____
(PLEASE PRINT)

____ We are able to participate in the study.

____ We are not able to participate in the study.

____ We would like more information and/or have questions about the study.

Thank you *Students are to return this form to me at our next class meeting.

Pseudonym: Geri

Grade 8 Health Name : [redacted]

Topic : Country, Culture & Family Home Assignment : 5

Guidelines for home assignment : Write a paragraph describing something unique, interesting or special to you about your country, culture or family. You may combine and write about country and culture or whatever you wish. You might write about some activity your family does together or you might describe something you do during the holidays.

Don't worry if you're not sure which country is your home country. For many families belonging to international school communities, it may be difficult to decide which country to write about. For example, some people may be born in one country and live there for a very short time. You can decide what you would like to write about.

If you are working with your parent, come up with some ideas together and then write about what you and your parent discussed.

I'm not sure which country is my home country, so I'm going to write about the country I'm most familiar with, Japan. Japan is really special to me because I feel that a lot that has influenced me, and made me what I am now. I lived there 6 years and I feel that I was really influenced by the people there, the culture, and the people. Even though I'm not Japanese, I think that I've really learned a lot from there and I don't think another country will influence me as much as Japan did. I also made many life long friends there and I've had a profound experience. This is why I feel that Japan is so special to me.

Parents : If you are participating in the study and you worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature : _____

Pseudonym: Anthony

Grade 8 Health Name: [redacted]

Topic: Country, Culture & Family Home Assignment: 5

Guidelines for home assignment: Write a paragraph describing something unique, interesting or special to you about your country, culture or family. You may combine and write about country and culture or whatever you wish. You might write about some activity your family does together or you might describe something you do during the holidays.

Don't worry if you're not sure which country is your home country. For many families belonging to international school communities, it may be difficult to decide which country to write about. For example, some people may be born in one country and live there for a very short time. You can decide what you would like to write about.

If you are working with your parent, come up with some ideas together and then write about what you and your parent discussed.

I think my country is very special to me, probably because I was born there. The reasons why I love my country a many: the food, the weather, the people, the familie and the style of life.
I like the food better because it is more healthy and genuin.
The weather is one of the best reasons why i love my country because we enjoy the 4 seasons. When i go back Italy for the summer i love swimming in the sunshine.
I enjoy all my friends and the people i know because they are very friendly, smiling and open. Every time i go bac Italy i see my 2 grandmothers my grandfather and they take me to the sea with all of them and i love to be spoiled by them. I allways look forward to go to my cou

Parents: If you are participating in the study and you worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature: [redacted]

Pseudonym: Annika

Grade 8 Health Name : [redacted]

Topic : Country, Culture & Family Home Assignment : 5

Guidelines for home assignment : Write a paragraph describing something unique, interesting or special to you about your country, culture or family. You may combine and write about country and culture or whatever you wish. You might write about some activity your family does together or you might describe something you do during the holidays.

Don't worry if you're not sure which country is your home country. For many families belonging to international school communities, it may be difficult to decide which country to write about. For example, some people may be born in one country and live there for a very short time. You can decide what you would like to write about.

If you are working with your parent, come up with some ideas together and then write about what you and your parent discussed.

Sweden

On the 13th of ~~[illegible]~~ December, we celebrate St Lucia. The kids in the early and buller" they parents celebrate, no school either. This is a celebration of family "get up bake" "Lusse make their breakfast and

Parents : If you are participating in the study and you worked with your son or daughter on this assignment, please sign below.

Parent's signature : _____

this didn't involve my mom.

light, on the dark, cold morn[redacted] of ~~a~~ December, ~~m~~ you get up, wear white gowns and candles on your head to scare away the dark.

What I like best about Sweden, I don't know, I love everything. the national anthemin, the people, the seasons. Cold snowy winters and warm summers. But most of all, it's my home.